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Ossians Poems,

Translated by James M.ᶜPherson Esq.ʳ

with the principal Dissertations on the

Æra and Poems of the Author

VOL. II.

Superbly Embellished.

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Ele ver her fair face before him &c Vide Timora Book 4.

THE

Poems of Ossian,

THE

SON OF FINGAL.

TRANSLATED BY

JAMES MACPHERSON, Esq.

To which are prefixed,

DISSERTATIONS ON THE ERA AND POEMS OF OSSIAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES,

EMBELLISHED WITH ENGRAVINGS.

We may boldly assign Ossian a place among those whose works are to last for ages. BLAIR.

VOL. II.

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CARTHON:

A POEM.

The Argument.

This poem is complete, and the subject of it, as of most of Ossian's compositions, tragical. In the time of Comhal the son of Trathal, and father of the celebrated Fingal, Clessammor the son of Thaddu and brother of Morna, Fingal's mother, was driven by a storm into the river Clyde, on the banks of which stood Balclutha, a town belonging to the Britons between the walls. He was hospitably received by Reuthamir, the principal man in the place, who gave him Moina his only daughter in marriage. Reuda, the son of Cormo, a Briton who was in love with Moina, came to Reuthamir's house and behaved haughtily towards Clessammor. A quarrel ensued, in which Reuda was killed; the Britons who attended him, pressed so hard on Clessammor, that he was obliged to throw himself into the Clyde, and swim to his ship. He hoisted sail, and the wind being favourable, bore him out to sea. He often endeavoured to return, and carry off his beloved Moina by night; but the wind continuing contrary he was forced to desist.

Moina, who had been left with child by her husband, brought forth a son, and died soon after. Reuthamir named the child Carthon, i. e. 'the murmur of waves,' from the storm which caried off Clessammor his father, who was supposed to have been cast away. When Carthon was three years old, Comhal the father of Fingal, in one of his expeditions against the Britons, took and burnt Balclutha. Reuthamir was killed in the attack; and Carthon was carried away by his nurse, who fled farther into the country of the Britons. Carthon coming to man's estate, was resolved to revenge the fall of Balclutha on Comhal's posterity. He set sail, from the Clyde, and falling on the coast of Morven, defeated two of Fingal's heroes who came to oppose his progress. He was at last unwittingly killed by his father Clessammor, in a single combat. This story is the foundation of the present poem, which opens on the night preceding the the death of Carthon; so that what passed before is introduced by way of episode. The poem is addressed to Malvina the daughter of Toscar.

A TALE of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years!

The murmur of thy streams, O Lora, brings back the memory of the past. The sound of thy woods, Garmallar, is lovely in mine ear. Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? Three aged firs bend from its face; green is the narrow plain at its feet; there the flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its white head in the breeze. The thistle is there alone, and sheds its aged beard. Two stones, half sunk in the ground, show their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place,

for he beholds the grey ghost that guards it [a], for the mighty lie, O Malvina, in the narrow plain of the rock.

A tale of the times of old! the deeds of days of other years!

Who comes from the land of strangers, with his thousands around him? the sun-beam pours its bright stream before him; and his hair meets the wind of the hills. His face is settled from war. He is calm as the evening beam, that looks from the cloud of the west, on Cona's silent vale. Who is it but Comhal's son [b], the king of mighty deeds! He beholds his hills with joy, and bids a thousand voices rise. Ye have fled over your fields, ye sons of the distant land! The king of the world sits in his hall, and hears of his people's flight. He lifts his red eye of pride, and takes his father's sword. "Ye have fled over your fields, sons of the distant land!"

Such were the words of the bards, when they came to Selma's halls. A thousand lights [c] from the stranger's land rose in the midst of the people. The feast is spread around; and the night passed away in joy. "Where is the noble Clessammor [d]?" said the fair-haired Fingal. Where is the companion of my father, in the days of my joy? Sullen and dark he passes his days in the vale of echoing Lora: but, behold he comes from the hill, like a steed in his strength, who finds his companions in the breeze, and tosses his bright mane in the wind. Blest be the soul of Clessammor; why so long from Selma?"

"Returns the chief," said Clessammor, "in the midst of his fame? Such was the renown of Comhal in the battles of his youth. Often did we pass over Carun to the land of the strangers; our swords returned not unstained with blood: nor did the kings of the world re-

a It was the opinion of the times, that deer saw the ghosts of the dead. To this day, when beasts suddenly start, without any apparent cause, the vulgar think they see the spirits of the deceased.

b Fingal returns here, from an expedition against the Romans, which was celebrated by Ossian in a particular poem.

c Probably wax lights: which are often mentioned as carried, among other booty, from the Roman province.

d Cleas-amh-mor, 'mighty deeds.'

joice. Why do I remember the battles of my youth? My hair is mixed with grey. My hand forgets to bend the bow: and I lift a lighter spear. O that my joy would return as when I first beheld the maid; the white-bosomed daughter of strangers, Moina [e] with the dark-blue eyes!"

"Tell," said the mighty Fingal, "the tale of thy youthful days. Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessammor. Mournful are thy thoughts, alone, on the banks of the roaring Lora. Let us hear the sorrow of thy youth, and the darkness of thy days."

"It was in the days of peace," replied the great Clessammor, "I came, in my bounding ship, to Balclutha's [f] walls of towers. The wind had roared behind my sails, and Clutha's [g] streams received my dark-bosomed vessel. Three days I remained in Reuthamir's halls, and saw that beam of light, his daughter. The joy of the shell went round, and the aged hero gave the fair. Her breasts were like foam on the wave, and her eyes like stars of light: her hair was dark as the raven's wing: her soul was generous and mild. My love for Moina was great; and my heart poured forth in joy.

"The son of a stranger came; a chief who loved the white-bosomed Moina. His words were mighty in the hall. And he often half unsheathed his sword. Where, he said, is the mighty Comhal, the restless wanderer [h] of the heath? Comes he, with his host, to Balclutha, since Clessammor is so bold? My soul, I replied, O warrior! burns in a light of its own. I stand without fear in the midst of thousands, though the valiant are distant far. Stranger! thy words are mighty, for Clessammor is alone. But my sword

e Moina, 'soft in temper and person.' We find the British names in this poem derived from the Gaelic, which is a proof that the ancient language of the whole island was one and the same.

f Balclutha, i. e. the town of Clyde, probably the Alcluth of Bede.

g Clutha, or Cluath, the Gaelic name of the river Clyde; the signification of the word is 'bending,' in allusion to the winding course of that river From Clutha is derived its Latin name, Glotta.

h the word in the original here rendered 'restless wanderer,' is Scuta, which is the origin of the Scoti of the Romans; an opprobrious name imposed by the Britons on the Caledonians on account of the continual incursions into their country.

trembles by my side, and longs to glitter in my hand. Speak no more of Comhal, son of the winding Clutha!"

" The strength of his pride arose. We fought; he fell beneath my sword. The banks of Clutha heard his fall, and a thousand spears glittered around. I fought: the strangers prevailed: I plunged into the stream of Clutha. My white sails rose over the waves, and I bounded on the dark-blue sea. Moina came to the shore, and rolled the red eye of her tears: her dark hair flew on the wind; and I heard her cries. Often did I turn my ship; but the winds of the east prevailed. Nor Clutha ever since have I seen, nor Moina of the dark-brown hair. She fell on Balclutha; for I have seen her ghost. I knew her as she came through the dusky night, along the murmur of Lora: she was like the new moon seen through the gathered mist: when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark."

" Raise [i], ye bards," said the mighty Fingal, " the praise of unhappy Moina. Call her ghosts, with your songs, to our hills; that she may rest with the fair of Morven, the sun-beams of other days, and the delight of heroes of old. I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls; and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook, there, its lonely head: the moss whistled in the wind. The fox looked out from the windows; the rank grass of the wall waved round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her father. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us: for, one day, we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? thou lookest from thy towers to day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desart comes: it howls on thy empty

[i] The title of this poem in the original is, 'Duan na nlaoi,' i. e. the 'Poem of Hymns;' probably on account of its many digressions from the subject, all which are in a lyric measure, as this song of Fingal. Fingal is celebrated by the Irish historians for his wisdom in making laws, his poetical genius, and foreknowledge of events. O'Flaherty goes so far as to say, that Fingal's laws were extant in his own time.

court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. And let the blast of the desart come! we shall be renowned in our day. The mark of my arm shall be in the battle, and my name in the song of bards. Raise the song; send round the shell: and let joy be heard in my hall. When thou, sun of heaven, shalt fail! if thou shalt fail, thou mighty light! if thy brightness is for a season; like Fingal, our fame shall survive thy beams."

Such was the song of Fingal, in the day of his joy. His thousand bards leaned forward from their seats, to hear the voice of the king. It was like the music of the harp on the gale of the spring. Lovely were thy thoughts, O Fingal! why had not Ossian the strength of thy soul? But thou standest alone, my father; and who can equal the king of Morven?

The night passed away in song, and morning returned in joy; the mountains shewed their grey heads; and the blue face of the ocean smiled. The white wave is seen tumbling round the distant rock; the grey mist rises slowly from the lake. It came, in the figure of an aged man, along the silent plain. Its large limbs did not move in steps, for a ghost supported it in mid air. It came towards Selma's hall, and dissolved in a shower of blood.

The king alone beheld the terrible sight, and he foresaw the death of the people. He came in silence to his hall; and took his father's spear. The mail rattled on his breast. The heroes rose around. They looked in silence on each other, marking the eyes of Fingal. They saw the battle in his face, the death of armies on his spear. A thousand shields, at once, are placed on their arms: and they drew a thousand swords. The hall of Selma brightened around. The clang of arms ascends. The grey dogs howl in their place. No word is among the mighty chiefs. Each marked the eyes of the king; and half-assumed his spear.

"Sons of Morven," begun the king, "this is no time to fill the shell. The battle darkens near us; and death hovers over the land. Some ghost, the friend of Fingal, has forewarned us of the foe. The sons of the

stranger come from the dark-rolling sea. For, from the water, came the sign of Morven's gloomy danger. Let each assume his heavy spear, and gird on his father's sword. Let the dark helmet rise on every head; and the mail pour its lightning from every side. The battle gathers like a tempest, and soon shall ye hear the roar of death."

The hero moved on before his host, like a cloud before a ridge of heaven's fire; when it pours on the sky of night, and mariners foresee a storm. On Cona's rising heath they stood: the white-bosomed maids beheld them above like a grove, and foresaw the death of their youths, and looked toward the sea with fear. The white wave deceived them for distant sails, and the tear is on their cheek. The sun rose on the sea, and we beheld a distant fleet. Like the mist of ocean they came: and poured their youth upon the coast. The chief was among them, like the stag in the midst of the herd. His shield is studded with gold, and stately strode the king of spears. He moved towards Selma; his thousands moved behind.

"Go, with thy song of peace," said Fingal; "go, Ullin, to the king of swords. Tell him that we are mighty in battle, and that the ghosts of our foes are many. But renowned are they who have feasted in my halls! they show the arms* of my fathers in a foreign land: the sons of the strangers wonder, and bless the friends of Morven's race; for our names have been heard afar; the kings of the world shook in the midst of their people."

Ullin went with his song. Fingal rested on his spear: he saw the mighty foe in his armour: and he blest the stranger's son. "How stately art thou, son of the sea!" said the king of woody Morven. "Thy sword is a beam of might by thy side: thy spear is a fir that defies the storm. The varied face of the moon is not broader than thy shield. Ruddy is thy face of youth! soft the ringlets of thy hair! But this tree may fall; and his

* It was a custom among the ancient Scots, to exchange arms with their guests, and those arms were preserved long in the different families, as monuments of the friendship which subsisted between their ancestors.

memory be forgot! The daughter of the stranger will be sad, and look to the rolling sea: the children will say, "We see a ship; perhaps it is the king of Balclutha." The tear starts from their mother's eye. Her thoughts are of him that sleeps in Morven."

Such were the words of the king, when Ullin came to the mighty Carthon: he threw down the spear before him; and raised the song of peace. "Come to the feast of Fingal, Carthon, from the rolling sea! partake the feast of the king, or lift the spear of war. The ghosts of our foes are many: but renowned are the friends of Morven! Behold that field, O Carthon; many a green hill rises there with mossy stones and rustling grass: these are the tombs of Fingal's foes, the sons of the rolling sea."

"Dost thou speak to the feeble in arms," said Carthon, "bard of the woody Morven? Is my face pale for fear, son of the peaceful song? Why, then, dost thou think to darken my soul with the tales of those who fell? My arm has fought in the battle; my renown is known afar. Go to the feeble in arms, and bid them yield to Fingal. Have not I seen the fallen Balclutha? and shall I feast with Comhal's son? Comhal! who threw his fire in the midst of my father's hall! I was young, and knew not the cause why the virgins wept. The columns of smoke pleased mine eye, when they rose above my walls; I often looked back, with gladness, when my friends fled along the hill. But when the years of my youth came on, I beheld the moss of my fallen walls: my sigh arose with the morning, and my tears descended with night. Shall I not fight, I said to my soul, against the children of my foes? And I will fight, O bard; I feel the strength of my soul."

His people gathered around the hero, and drew, at once, their shining swords. He stands, in the midst, like a pillar of fire, the tear half-starting from his eye; for he thought of the fallen Balclutha, and the crowded pride of his soul arose. Sidelong he looked up to the hill, where our heroes shone in arms; the spear trem-

bled in his hand: and, bending forward, he seemed to threaten the king.

" Shall I," said Fingal to his soul, " meet, at once, the king: shall I stop him in the midst of his course, before his fame shall arise? But the bard, hereafter, may say, when he sees the tomb of Carthon; Fingal took his thousands along with him to battle, before the noble Carthon fell. No: bard of the times to come! thou shalt not lessen Fingal's fame. My heroes will fight the youth, and Fingal behold the battle. If he overcomes, I rush, in my strength, like the roaring stream of Cona. Who of my heroes will meet the son of the rolling sea? Many are his warriors on the coast: and strong is his ashen spear!"

Cathul[l] rose in his strength, the son of the mighty Lormar: three hundred youths attend the chief, the race[m] of his native streams. Feeble was his arm against Carthon; he fell, and his heroes fled. Connal[n] resumed the battle, but he broke his heavy spear: he lay bound on the field: and Carthon pursued his people. " Clessammor!" said the king[o] of Morven, " where is the spear of thy strength? Wilt thou behold Connal bound; thy friend, at the stream of Lora? Rise, in the light of thy steel, thou friend of Comhal. Let the youth of Balclutha feel the strength of Morven's race." He rose in the strength of his steel, shaking his grizzly locks. He fitted the shield to his side; and rushed, in the pride of his valour.

Carthon stood on that heathy rock, and saw the hero's approach. He loved the terrible joy of his face: and his strength, in the locks of age. " Shall I lift that spear," he said, " that never strikes but once a foe? Or shall I, with the words of peace, preserve the warrior's life? Stately are his steps of age; lovely the remnant of his years. Perhaps it is the love of Moina;

l Cath-'huil, 'the eye of battle.'

m It appears, from this passage, that clanship was established in the days of Fingal, though not on the same footing with the present tribes in the north of Scotland.

n This Connal is very much celebrated, in ancient poetry, for his wisdom and valour: there is a small tribe still subsisting in the North, who pretend they are descended from him.

o Fingal did not then know that Carthon was the son of Clessammor.

the father of car-borne Carthon. Often have I heard, that he dwelt at the echoing stream of Lora."

Such were his words, when Clessammor came, and lifted high his spear. The youth received it on his shield, and spoke the words of peace. "Warrior of the aged locks! is there no youth to lift the spear? Hast thou no son to raise the shield before his father, and to meet the arm of youth? Is the spouse of thy love no more? or weeps she over the tomb of thy sons? Art thou of the kings of men! What will be the fame of my sword if thou shalt fall?"

"It will be great, thou son of pride!" begun the tall Clessammor; "I have been renowned in battle: but I never told my name[p] to a foe. Yield to me, son of the wave, and then thou shalt know that the mark of my sword is in many a field." "I never yieldéd, king of spears!" replied the noble pride of Carthon: "I have also fought in battles! and I beheld my future fame. Despise me not, thou chief of men; my arm, my spear is strong. Retire among thy friends, and let young heroes fight." "Why dost thou wound my soul!" replied Clessammor with a tear. "Age does not tremble on my hand; I still can lift the sword. Shall I fly in Fingal's sight; in the sight of him I loved? Son of the sea, I never fled: exalt thy pointed spear."

They fought, like two contending winds, that strive to roll the wave. Carthon bade his spear to err; for he still thought that the foe was the spouse of Moina. He broke Clessammor's beamy spear in twain, and seized his shining sword. But as Carthon was binding the chief, the chief drew the dagger of his fathers. He saw the foe's uncovered side; and opened, there, a wound.

Fingal saw Clessammor low: he moved in the sound of his steel. The host stood silent in his presence: they turned their eyes towards the hero. He came, like the sullen noise of a storm, before the winds arise: the hun-

p To tell one's name to an enemy was reckoned, in those days of heroism, a manifest evasion of fighting him: for, if it was once known that friendship subsisted, of old, between the ancestors of the combatants, the battle immediately ceased, and the ancient amity of their forefathers was renewed. A man who tells his name to his enemy, was, of old, an ignominious term for a coward.

ter hears it in the vale, and retires to the cave of the rock. Carthon stood in his place : the blood is rushing down his side : he saw the coming down of the king ; and his hopes of fame arose[q] ; but pale was his cheek : his hair flew loose, his helmet shook on high : the force of Carthon failed ! but his soul was strong.

Fingal beheld the hero's blood ; he stopt the uplifted spear. " Yield, king of swords !" said Comhal's son ; " I behold thy blood. Thou hast been mighty in battle ; and thy fame shall never fade." " Art thou the king so far renowned ?" replied the car-borne Carthon. " Art thou that light of death, that frightens the kings of the world ? But why should Carthon ask ? for he is like the stream of the desart ; strong as a river in his course, swift as the eagle of the sky. O that I had fought with the king ; that my fame might be great in the song ! that the hunter, beholding my tomb, might say, He fought with the mighty Fingal. But Carthon dies unknown ! he has poured out his force on the feeble."

" But thou shalt not die unknown," replied the king of woody Morven : " my bards are many, O Carthon ! and their songs descend to future times. The children of the years to come shall hear the fame of Carthon ; when they sit round the burning oak[r], and the night is spent in songs of old. The hunter, sitting in the heath, shall hear the rustling blast ; and, raising his eyes, behold the rock where Carthon fell. He shall turn to his son, and shew the place where the mighty fought ; ' There the king of Balclutha fought, like the strength of a thousand streams."

Joy rose in Carthon's face : he lifted his heavy eyes. He gave his sword to Fingal, to lie within his hall, that the memory of Balclutha's king might remain on Morven. The battle ceased along the field, for the bard had sung the song of peace. The chiefs gathered round

q This expression admits of a double meaning, either that Carthon hoped to acquire glory by killing Fingal, or to be rendered famous by falling by his hand ; the last is the most probable, as Carthon is already wounded.

r In the north of Scotland, till very lately, they burnt a large trunk of an oak at their festivals ; it was called the trunk of the feast. Time had so much consecrated the custom, that the vulgar thought it a kind of sacrilege to disuse it.

the falling Carthon, and heard his words with sighs. Silent they leaned on their spears, while Balclutha's hero spoke. His hair sighed on the wind, and his words were feeble.

" King of Morven," Carthon said, " I fall in the midst of my course. A foreign tomb receives, in youth, the last of Reuthamir's race. Darkness dwells in Balclutha: and the shadows of grief in Crathmo. But raise my remembrance on the banks of Lora, where my fathers dwelt. Perhaps the husband of Moina will mourn over his fallen Carthon." His words reached the heart of Clessammor: he fell, in silence, on his son. The host stood darkened around: no voice is heard on the plains of Lora. Night came, and the moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field: but still they stood, like a silent grove that lifts its head on Gormal, when the loud winds are laid, and dark autumn is on the plain.

Three days they mourned over Carthon: on the fourth, his father died. In the narrow plain of the rock they lie; and a dim ghost defends their tomb. There lovely Moina is often seen; when the sun-beam darts on the rock, and all around is dark. There she is seen, Malvina, but not like the daughters of the hill. Her robes are from the strangers' land; and she is still alone.

Fingal was sad for Carthon; he desired his bards to mark the day, when shadowy autumn returned. And often did they mark the day, and sing the hero's praise. " Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud? Death is trembling in his hand! his eyes are flames of fire! Who roars along dark Lora's heath? Who but Carthon, king of swords? The people fall! see! how he strides, like the sullen ghost of Morven! But there he lies, a goodly oak, which sudden blasts overturned! When shalt thou rise, Balclutha's joy! lovely car-borne Carthon! Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud?" Such were the words of the bards in the day of their mourning: I have accompanied their voice; and added to their

song. My soul has been mournful for Carthon, he fell in the days of his valour: and thou, O Clessammor! where is thy dwelling in the air? Has the youth forgot his wound? And flies he on the clouds, with thee? I feel the sun, O Malvina; leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come to my dreams; I think I hear a feeble voice. The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthon: I feel it warm around. O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth, in thy awful beauty, and the stars hide themselves in the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself movest alone: who can be a companion of thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall: the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again: the moon herself is lost in heaven; but thou art for ever the same; rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west. But thou art perhaps like me, for a season, and thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills; the blast of the north is on the plain, the traveller shrinks in the midst of his journey.

THE

DEATH OF CUTHULLIN:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Arth the son of Cairbre, supreme king of Ireland, dying, was succeeded by his son Cormac, a minor. Cuthullin, the son of Semo, who had rendered himself famous by his great actions, and who resided, at the time, with Connal, the son of Caithbat, in Ulster, was elected regent. In the twenty-seventh year of Cuthullin's age, and the third of his administration, Torlath, the son of Cantela, one of the chiefs of that colony of Belgæ who were in possession of the south of Ireland, rebelled in Connaught, and advanced towards Temora, in order to dethrone Cormac, who, excepting Feradath, afterwards king of Ireland, was the only one of the Scottish race of kings existing in that country. Cuthullin marched against them, came up with them at the lake of Lego, and totally defeated his forces. Torlath fell in battle by Cuthullin's hand; but as he himself pressed too eagerly on the flying enemy, he was mortally wounded by an arrow, and died the second day after. The good fortune of Cormac fell with Cuthullin: many set up for themselves, and anarchy and confusion reigned. At last Cormac was taken off; and Cairbar, lord of Atha, one of the competitors for the throne, having defeated all his rivals, became sole monarch of Ireland. The family of Fingal, who were in the interests of Cormac's family, were resolved to deprive Cairbar of the throne he had usurped. Fingal arrived from Scotland with an army, defeated the friends of Cairbar, and re-established the family of Cormac in the possession of the kingdom. The present poem concerns the death of Cuthullin. It is, in the original, called 'Duan-loch Leigo,' i. e. The poem of Lego's Lake; and is an episode introduced in a great poem, which celebrated the last expedition of Fingal into Ireland. The greatest part of the poem is lost, and nothing remains but some episodes, which a few old people in the north of Scotland retain on memory.

Is the wind on Fingal's shield? Or is the voice of past times in my hall? Sing on, sweet voice, for thou art pleasant, and carriest away my night with joy. Sing on, O Bragela, daughter of car-borne Sorglan!

"It is the white wave of the rock, and not Cuthullin's sails. Often do the mists deceive me for the ship of my love! when they rise round some ghost, and spread their grey skirts on the wind. Why dost thou delay thy coming, son of the generous Semo! Four times has autumn returned with its winds, and raised the seas of Togorma[a], since thou hast been in the roar of battles,

a Togorma, i. e. 'the island of blue waves,' one of the Hebrides, was subject to Connal, the son of Caithbat, Cuthullin's friend. He is sometimes called the son of Colgar, from one of that name who was the founder of the family. Connal, a few days before

and Bragela distant far. Hills of the isle of mist! when will ye answer to his hounds? But ye are dark in your clouds, and sad Bragela calls in vain. Night comes rolling down: the face of ocean fails. The heath-cock's head is beneath his wing: the hind sleeps with the hart of the desart. They shall rise with the morning's light, and feed on the mossy stream. But my tears return with the sun, my sighs come on with the night. When wilt thou come in thine arms, O chief of the mossy Tura?"

Pleasant is thy voice in Ossian's ear, daughter of car-borne Sorglan! but retire to the hall of shells; to the beam of the burning oak. Attend to the murmur of the sea: it rolls at Dunscaich's walls: let sleep descend on thy blue eyes, and the hero come to thy dreams.

Cuthullin sits at Lego's lake, at the dark rolling of waters. Night is around the hero, and his thousands spread on the heath: a hundred oaks burn in the midst; the feast of shells is smoking wide. Carril strikes the harp beneath a tree; his grey locks glitter in the beam; the rustling blast of night is near, and lifts his aged hair. His song is of the blue Togorma, and of its chief, Cuthullin's friend. "Why art thou absent, Connal, in the day of the gloomy storm? The chiefs of the south have convened against the car-borne Cormac; the winds detain thy sails, and thy blue waters roll around thee. But Cormac is not alone; the son of Semo fights his battles. Semo's son his battles fights: the terror of the stranger! he that is like the vapour of death slowly borne by sultry winds. The sun reddens in its presence, the people fall around."

Such was the song of Carril, when a son of the foe appeared; he threw down his pointless spear, and spoke the words of Torlath; Torlath, the chief of heroes, from Lego's sable surge: he that led his thousands to battle, against car-borne Cormac; Cormac who was distant far, in Temora's[b] echoing halls: he learned to

[a] the news of Torlath's revolt came to Temora, had sailed to Togorma, his native isle; where he was detained by contrary winds during the war in which Cuthullin was killed.

[b] The royal palace of the Irish kings; Teamhrath, according to some of the bards.

bend the bow of his fathers; and to lift the spear. Nor long didst thou lift the spear, mildly-shining beam of youth! Death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon behind its growing light. Cuthullin rose before the bard[c], that came from generous Torlath; he offered him the shell of joy, and honoured the son of songs. "Sweet voice of Lego!" he said, "what are the words of Torlath? Comes he to our feast or battle, the car-borne son of Cantela[d]?"

"He comes to thy battle," replied the bard, "to the sounding strife of spears. When morning is grey on Lego, Torlath will fight on the plain: and wilt thou meet him in thine arms, king of the isle of mist? Terrible is the spear of Torlath! It is a meteor of night. He lifts it, and the people fall: death sits in the lightning of his sword." "Do I fear," replied Cuthullin, "the spear of car-borne Torlath? He is brave as a thousand heroes; but my soul delights in war. The sword rests not by the side of Cuthullin, bard of the times of old! Morning shall meet me on the plain, and gleam on the blue arms of Semo's son. But sit thou on the heath, O bard! and let us hear thy voice; partake of the joyful shell; and hear the songs of Temora."

"This is no time," replied the bard, "to hear the song of joy; when the mighty are to meet in battle like the strength of the waves of Lego. Why art thou so dark, Slimora[e]! with all thy silent woods? No green star trembles on thy top; no moon-beam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there, and the grey watry forms of ghosts. Why art thou dark, Slimora! with thy silent woods?" He retired in the sound of his song: Carril accompanied his voice. The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul. The ghosts of departed bards

c The bards were the heralds of ancient times; and their persons were sacred on account of their office. In later times they abused that privilege, and as their persons were inviolable, they satyrised and lampooned so freely those who were not liked by their patrons, that they became a public nuisance screened under the character of heralds, they grossly abused the enemy when he would not accept the terms they offered.

d Cean-teola, 'head of a family.'

e Slia'-mor, 'great hill.'

heard it from Slimora's side. Soft sounds spread along the wood, and the silent valleys of night rejoice. So when he sits in the silence of noon, in the valley of his breeze, the humming of the mountain-bee comes to Ossian's ear: the gale drowns it often in its course; but the pleasant sound returns again.

" Raise," said Cuthullin, to his hundred bards, " the song of the noble Fingal: that song which he hears at night, when the dreams of his rest descend; when the bards strike the distant harp, and the faint light gleams on Selma's walls. Or let the grief of Lara rise, and the sighs of the mother of Calmar[f], when he was sought, in vain, on his hills, and she beheld his bow in the hall. Carril, place the shield of Caithbat on that branch; and let the spear of Cuthullin be near; that the sound of my battle may rise with the grey beam of the east." The hero leaned on his father's shield; the song of Lara rose. The hundred bards were distant far: Carril alone is near the chief. The words of the song were his; and the sound of his harp was mournful.

" Alcletha[g] with the aged locks! mother of carborne Calmar! why dost thou look towards the desart, to behold the return of thy son? These are not his heroes, dark on the heath: nor is that the voice of Calmar: it is but the distant grove, Alcletha! but the roar of the mountain wind!" Who[h] bounds over Lara's stream, sister of the noble Calmar? Does not Alcletha behold his spear? But her eyes are dim! It is not the son of Matha, daughter of my love?"

" It is but an aged oak, Alcletha!" replied the lovely weeping Alona[i]. " It is but an oak, Alcletha, bent over Lara's stream. But who comes along the plain?

f Calmar the son of Matha. His death is related at large in the third book of Fingal. He was the only son of Matha: and the family was extinct in him. The seat of the family was on the banks of the river Lara, in the neighbourhood of Lego, and probably near the place were Cuthullin lay; which circumstance suggested to him the lamentation of Alcletha over her son.

g Ald-cletha, 'decaying beauty;' probably a poetical name given the mother of Calmar, by the bard himself.

h Alcletha speaks Calmar had promised to return, by a certain day; and his mother and his sister Alona are represented by the bard, as looking with impatience towards the quarter where they expected Calmar would make his first appearance.

i Aluine, 'exquisitely beautiful.'

sorrow is in his speed. He lifts high the spear of Calmar. Alcletha! it is covered with blood!" "But it is covered with the blood of foes[k], sister of car-borne Calmar! his spear never returned unstained with blood, nor his bow from the strife of the mighty. The battle is consumed in his presence: he is a flame of death. Alona! youth[l] of the mournful speed! where is the son of Alcletha? Does he return with his fame! in the midst of his echoing shields! Thou art dark and silent! Calmar is then no more. Tell me not, warrior, how he fell, for I cannot hear of his wound."

"Why dost thou look towards the desart, mother of car-borne Calmar?"

Such was the song of Carril, when Cuthullin lay on his shield: the bards rested on their harps, and sleep fell softly around. The son of Semo was awake alone; his soul was fixed on the war. The burning oaks began to decay; faint red light is spread around. A feeble voice is heard! the ghost of Calmar came. He stalked in the beam. Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and loose. Joy sits darkly on his face; and he seems to invite Cuthullin to his cave.

"Son of the cloudy night!" said the rising chief of Erin: "Why dost thou bend thy dark eyes on me, ghost of the car-borne Calmar? Wouldst thou frighten me, O Matha's son! from the battles of Cormac? Thy hand was not feeble in war; neither was thy voice[m] for peace. How art thou changed, chief of Lara! if thou now dost advise to fly! But, Calmar, I never fled. I never feared[n] the ghost of the desart. Small is their knowledge, and weak their hands; their dwelling is in the wind. But my soul grows in danger, and rejoices in the noise of steel. Retire thou to thy cave; thou art not Calmar's ghost; he delighted in battle, and his arm was like the thunder of heaven."

k Alcletha speaks.
l She addresses herself to Lanir, Calmar's friend, who had returned with the news of his death.
m See Calmar's speech. Fing. B. I.
n See Cuthullin's reply to Connal, concerning Crugal's ghost, Fing. B. II.

He retired in his blast with joy, for he had heard the voice of his praise. The faint beam of the morning rose, and the sound of Caithbat's buckler spread. Green Ullin's warriors convened, like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over Lego; the mighty Torlath came.

" Why dost thou come with thy thousands, Cuthullin ?" said the chief of Lego. " I know the strength of thy arm, and thy soul is an unextinguished fire. Why fight we not on the plain, and let our hosts behold our deeds ? Let them behold us like roaring waves, that tumble round a rock : the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear."

" Thou risest like the sun, on my soul," replied the son of Semo. " Thine arm is mighty, O Torlath; and worthy of my wrath. Retire, ye men of Ullin, to Slimora's shady side; behold the chief of Erin, in the day of his fame. Carril ! tell to mighty Connal, if Cuthullin must fall, tell him I accused the winds which roar on Togorma's waves. Never was he absent in battle, when the strife of my fame arose. Let this sword be before Cormac like the beam of heaven : let his counsel sound in Temora in the day of danger."

He rushed, in the sound of his arms, like the terrible spirit of Loda[o], when he comes in the roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles from his eyes. He sits on a cloud over Lochlin's seas : his mighty hand is on his sword, and the winds lift his flaming locks. So terrible was Cuthullin in the day of his fame. Torlath fell by his hand, and Lego's heroes mourned. They gather around the chief like the clouds of the desart. A thousand swords rose at once; a thousand arrows flew; but he stood like a rock in the midst of a roaring sea. They fell around; he strode in blood : dark Slimora echoed wide. The sons of Ullin came; and the battle spread over Lego. The chief of Erin overcame; he returned over the field with his fame. But pale he returned ! The joy of his face was dark.

o Loda, in the third book of Fingal, is mentioned as a place of worship in Scandinavia; by the spirit of Loda, the poet probably means Odin, the great deity of the northern nations.

He rolled his eyes in silence. The sword hung, unsheathed, in his hand, and his spear bent at every step.

" Carril," said the king in secret, " the strength of Cuthullin fails. My days are with the years that are past: and no morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora, but I shall not be found. Cormac will weep in his hall, and say, " Where is Tura's chief?" But my name is renowned? my fame in the song of bards. The youth will say in secret, " O let me die as Cuthullin died; renown clothed him like a robe; and the light of his fame is great. Draw the arrow from my side; and lay Cuthullin beneath that oak. Place the shield of Caithbat near, that they may behold me amidst the arms of my fathers."

" And is the son of Semo fallen!" said Carril with a sigh. " Mournful are Tura's walls; and sorrow dwells at Dunscaich. Thy spouse is left alone in her youth, the son[p] of thy love is alone. He shall come to Bragela, and ask her, why she weeps. He shall lift his eyes to the wall, and see his father's sword. " Whose sword is that?" he will say: and the soul of his mother is sad. Who is that like the hart of the desart, in the murmur of his course? His eyes look wildly round in search of his friend. Connal, son of Colgar, where hast thou been, when the mighty fell? Did the seas of Togorma roll around thee? Was the wind of the south in thy sails? The mighty have fallen in battle, and thou wast not there. Let none tell it in Selma, nor in Morven's woody land; Fingal will be sad, and the sons of the desart mourn."

By the dark-rolling waves of Lego they raised the hero's tomb. Luath[q], at a distance lies, the companion of Cuthullin at the chase.

[p] Conloch, who was afterwards very famous for his great exploits in Ireland. He was so remarkable for his dexterity in handling the javelin, that when a good marksman is described, it has passed into a proverb, in the north of Scotland, 'He is unerring as the arm of Conloch.'

[q] It was of old the custom to bury the favourite dog near the master. This was not peculiar to the ancient Scots, for we find it practised by many other nations in their ages of heroism. There is a stone shown still at Dunscaich, in the Isle of Sky, to which Cuthullin bound his dog Luath. The stone goes by his name to this day.

" Blest[r] be thy soul, son of Semo; thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like the strength of a stream: thy speed like the eagle's wing. Thy path in the battle was terrible: the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Semo; car-borne son of Dunscaich: Thou hast not fallen by the sword of the mighty, neither was thy blood on the spear of the valiant. The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast; nor did the feeble hand which drew the bow perceive it. Peace to thy soul, in thy cave, chief of the isle of mist!

" The mighty are dispersed at Temora: there is none in Cormac's hall. The king mourns in his youth, for he does not behold thy coming. The sound of thy shield is ceased: his foes are gathering round. Soft be thy rest in thy cave, chief of Erin's wars! Bragela will not hope thy return, or see thy sails in ocean's foam. Her steps are not on the shore; nor her ear open to the voice of thy rowers. She sits in the hall of shells, and sees the arms of him that is no more. Thine eyes are full of tears, daughter of car-borne Sorglan! Blest be thy soul in death, O chief of shady Cromla!"

r This is the song of the bards over Cuthullin's tomb. Every stanza closes with some remarkable title of the hero, which was always the custom in funeral elegies. The verse of the song is a lyric measure; and it was of old sung to the harp.

DAR-THULA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

It may not be improper here, to give the story, which is the foundation of this poem, as it is handed down by tradition. Usnoth, Lord of Etha, which is probably that part of Argyleshire which is near Loch Eta, an arm of the sea in Lorn, had three sons, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, by Slissama, the daughter of Semo, and sister to the celebrated Cuthullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland by their father, to learn the use of arms under their uncle Cuthullin, who made a great figure in that kingdom. They were just landed in Ulster, when the news of Cuthullin's death arrived. Nathos, though very young, took the command of Cuthullin's army, made head against Cairbar the usurper, and defeated him in several battles. Cairbar at last having found means to murder Cormac the lawful king, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and he himself was obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland.

Dar-thula, the daughter of Colla, with whom Cairbar was in love, resided, at that time, in Selama, a castle in Ulster; she saw, fell in love, and fled with Nathos; but a storm rising at sea, they were unfortunately driven back on that part of the coast of Ulster where Cairbar was encamped with his army, waiting for Fingal, who meditated an expedition into Ireland, to re-establish the Scottish race of kings on the throne of that kingdom. The three brothers, after having defended themselves, for some time, with great bravery, were overpowered and slain, and the unfortunate Dar-thula killed herself upon the body of her beloved Nathos.

Ossian opens the poem, on the night preceding the death of the sons of Usnoth, and brings in, by way of episode, what passed before. He relates the death of Dar-thula differently from the common tradition; his account is the most probable, as suicide seems to have been unknown in those early times: for no traces of it are found in the old poetry.

DAUGHTER of heaven [a], fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant. Thou comest forth in loveliness; the stars attend thy blue steps in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O moon, and brighten their dark-brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, daughter of the night? The stars are ashamed in thy presence, and turn aside their green, sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness [b] of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? Are they who rejoiced with

a The address to the moon is very beautiful in the original. It is a lyric measure and appears to have been sung to the harp.

b The poet means the moon in her wane.

thee at night, no more? Yes! they have fallen, fair light! and thou dost often retire to mourn. But thou thyself shalt fail, one night; and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their green heads: they who were ashamed in thy presence will rejoice. Thou art now clothed with thy brightness: look from thy gates in the sky. Burst the cloud, O wind, that the daughter of night may look forth, that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean roll its blue waves in light.

Nathos [c] is on the deep, and Althos that beam of youth; Arden is near his brothers; they move in the gleam of their course. The sons of Usnoth move in darkness, from the wrath of car-borne Cairbar [d]. Who is that dim, by their side? the night has covered her beauty. Her hair sighs on the ocean's wind; her robe streams in dusky wreaths. She is like the fair spirit of heaven, in the midst of his shadowy mist. Who is it but Darthula [e], the first of Erin's maids? She has fled from the love of Cairbar, with the car-borne Nathos. But the winds deceive thee, O Dar-thula; and deny the woody Etha to thy sails. These are not thy mountains, Nathos, nor is that the roar of thy climbing waves; the halls of Cairbar are near; and the towers of the foe lift their heads. Ullin stretches its green head into the sea; and Tura's bay receives the ship. Where have ye been, ye southern winds! when the sons of my love were deceived! But ye have been sporting on plains, and pursuing the thistle's beard. O that ye had been rustling in the sails of Nathos, till the hills of Etha rose! till they rose in their clouds, and saw their coming chief! Long hast thou been absent, Nathos! and the day of thy return is past.

But the land of strangers saw thee lovely: thou wast lovely in the eyes of Dar-thula. Thy face was like the light of the morning, thy hair like the raven's wing.

c Nathos signifies 'youthful;' Ailthos, 'exquisite beauty;' Ardan, 'pride.'

d Cairbar, who murdered Cormac king of Ireland, and usurped the throne. He was afterwards killed by Oscar the son of Ossian in a single combat. The poet upon other occasions gives him the epithet of red-haired.

e Dar-thula, or Dart 'huile, 'a woman with fine eyes.' She was the most famous beauty of antiquity. To this day, when a woman is praised for her beauty, the common phrase is, that 'She is lovely as Dar-thula.'

Thy soul was generous and mild, like the hour of the setting sun. Thy words were the gale of the reeds, or the gliding stream of Lora. But when the rage of battle rose, thou wast like a sea in a storm; the clang of arms was terrible: the host vanished at the sound of thy course. It was then Dar-thula beheld thee from the top of her mossy tower: from the tower of Selama[f], where her fathers dwelt.

"Lovely art thou, O stranger!" she said, for her trembling soul arose. "Fair art thou in thy battles, friend of the fallen Cormac[g]! Why dost thou rush on, in thy valour, youth of the ruddy look? Few are thy hands in battle, against the car-borne Cairbar! O that I might be freed of his love[h]! that I may rejoice in the presence of Nathos! Blest are the rocks of Etha; they will behold his steps at the chase! they will see his white bosom, when the winds lift his raven hair!"

Such were thy words, Dar-thula, in Selama's mossy towers. But, now, the night is round thee: and the winds have deceived thy sails. The winds have deceived thy sails, Dar-thula: their blustering sound is high. Cease a little while, O north wind, and let me hear the voice of the lovely. Thy voice is lovely, Dar-thula, between the rustling blasts.

"Are these the rocks of Nathos, and the roar of his mountain streams? Comes that beam of light from Usnoth's nightly hall? The mist rolls around, and the beam is feeble, but the light of Dar-thula's soul is the car-borne chief of Etha! Son of the generous Usnoth, why that broken sigh? Are we not in the land of strangers, chief of echoing Etha?"

"These are not the rocks of Nathos," he replied, "nor the roar of his streams. No light comes from Etha's halls, for they are distant far. We are in the land of strangers, in the land of car-borne Cairbar. The

f The poet does not mean that Selama which is mentioned as the seat of Toscar in Ulster, in the poem of Conlath and Cuthona. The word in the original signifies either beautiful to behold, or a place with pleasant or wide prospect. In those times they built their houses upon eminences, to command a view of the country, and to prevent their being surprised: many of them, on that account, were called Selama. The famous Selma of Fingal is derived from the same root.

g Cormac the young king of Ireland, who was murdered by Cairbar.

h That is, of the love of Cairbar.

winds have deceived us, Dar-thula. Ullin here lifts her green hills. Go towards the north, Althos; be thy steps, Ardan, along the coast; that the foe may not come in darkness, and our hopes of Etha fail. I will go towards that mossy tower, and see who dwells about the beam. Rest, Dar-thula, on the shore! rest in peace, thou beam of light! the sword of Nathos is around thee, like the lightning of heaven."

He went. She sat alone, and heard the rolling of the wave. The big tear is in her eye; and she looks for the car-borne Nathos. Her soul trembles at the blast. And she turns her ear towards the tread of his feet. The tread of his feet is not heard. "Where art thou, son of my love? the roar of the blast is around me. Dark is the cloudy night. But Nathos does not return. What detains thee, chief of Etha? Have the foes met the hero in the strife of the night?"

He returned, but his face was dark: he had seen his departed friend. It was the wall of Tura, and the ghost of Cuthullin stalked there. The sighing of his breast was frequent; and the decayed flame of his eyes terrible. His spear was a column of mist: the stars looked dim through his form. His voice was like hollow wind in a cave: and he told the tale of grief. The soul of Nathos was sad, like the sun in the day of mist, when his face is watery and dim.

"Why art thou sad, O Nathos?" said the lovely daughter of Colla. "Thou art a pillar of light to Dar-thula: The joy of her eyes is in Etha's chief. Where is my friend, but Nathos? My father rests in the tomb. Silence dwells on Selama: Sadness spreads on the blue streams of my land. My friends have fallen with Cormac. The mighty were slain in the battle of Ullin.

"Evening darkened on the plain. The blue streams failed before mine eyes. The unfrequent blast came rustling in the tops of Selama's groves. My seat was beneath a tree on the walls of my fathers. Truthil past before my soul; the brother of my love; he that was absent[i] in battle against the car-borne Cairbar. Bend-

[i] The family of Colla preserved their loyalty to Cormac long after the death of Cuthullin.

ing on his spear, the grey-haired Colla came: his downcast face is dark, and sorrow dwells in his soul. His sword is on the side of the hero: the helmet of his fathers on his head. The battle grows in his breast. He strives to hide the tear.

"Dar-thula," he sighing said, "thou art the last of Colla's race. Truthil is fallen in battle. The king[k] of Selama is no more. Cairbar comes, with his thousands, toward Selama's walls. Colla will meet his pride, and revenge his son. But where shall I find thy safety, Dar-thula with the dark-brown hair? thou art lovely as the sun-beam of heaven, and thy friends are low." "And is the son of battle fallen?" I said with a bursting sigh. "Ceased the generous soul of Truthil to lighten through the field? My safety, Colla, is in that bow; I have learned to pierce the deer. Is not Cairbar like the hart of the desart, father of fallen Truthil?"

The face of age brightened with joy: and the crowded tears of his eyes poured down. The lips of Colla trembled. His grey beard whistled in the blast. "Thou art the sister of Truthil," he said; "thou burnest in the fire of his soul. Take, Dar-thula, take that spear, that brazen shield, that burnished helmet: they are the spoils of a warrior! a son[l] of early youth. When the light rises on Selama, we go to meet the car-borne Cairbar. But keep thou near the arm of Colla; beneath the shadow of my shield. Thy father, Dar-thula, could once defend thee, but age is trembling on his hand. The strength of his arm has failed, and his soul is darkened with grief."

We passed the night in sorrow. The light of morning rose. I shone in the arms of battle. The grey-haired hero moved before. The sons of Selama convened around the sounding shield of Colla. But few were they in the plain, and their locks were grey. The

k It is very common, in Ossian's poetry, to give the title of king to every chief that was remarkable for his valour.

l The poet, to make the story of Dar-thula's arming herself for battle more probable, makes her armour to be that of a very young man, otherwise it would shock all belief, at she, who was very young, should be able to carry it.

youths had fallen with Truthil, in the battle of car-borne Cormac.

"Companions of my youth!" said Colla, "it was not thus you have seen me in arms. It was not thus I strode to battle, when the great Confadan fell. But ye are laden with grief. The darkness of age comes like the mist of the desart. My shield is worn with years; my sword is fixed [m] in its place. I said to my soul, thy evening shall be calm, and thy departure like a fading light. But the storm has returned; I bend like an aged oak. My boughs are fallen on Selama, and I tremble in my place. Where art thou, with thy fallen heroes, O my beloved Truthil? Thou answeredst not from thy rushing blast: and the soul of thy father is sad. But I will be sad no more, Cairbar or Colla must fall. I feel the returning strength of my arm. My heart leaps at the sound of battle."

The hero drew his sword. The gleaming blades of his people rose. They moved along the plain. Their grey hair streamed in the wind. Cairbar sat at the feast, in the silent plain of Lona [n]. He saw the coming of heroes, and he called his chiefs to battle. Why [o] should I tell to Nathos, how the strife of battle grew? I have seen thee in the midst of thousands, like the beam of heaven's fire: it is beautiful, but terrible; the people fall in its red course. The spear of Colla slew, for he remembered the battles of his youth. An arrow came with its sound, and pierced the hero's side. He fell on his echoing shield. My soul started with fear, I stretched my buckler over him; but my heaving breast was seen. Cairbar came, with his spear, and he beheld Selama's maid: joy rose on his dark-brown face: he stayed the lifted steel. He raised the tomb of Colla; and

m It was the custom of those times, that every warrior at a certain age, or when he became unfit for the field, fixed his arms in the great hall, where the tribe feasted, upon joyful occasions. He was afterwards never to appear in battle; and this stage of life was called 'the time of fixing of arms.'

n Lona, 'a marshy plain.' It was the custom, in the days of Ossian, to feast after a victory. Cairbar had just provided an entertainment for his army upon the defeat of Truthil, the son of Colla, and the rest of the party of Cormac, when Colla and his aged warriors arrived to give him battle.

o The poet avoids the description of the battle of Lona, as it would be improper in the mouth of a woman, and could have nothing new, after the numerous descriptions, in his other poems. He, at the same time, gives an opportunity to Dar-thula to pass a fine compliment on her lover.

brought me weeping to Selama. He spoke the words of love, but my soul was sad. I saw the shields of my fathers, and the sword of car-borne Truthil. I saw the arms of the dead, and the tear was on my cheek.

Then thou didst come, O Nathos: and gloomy Cairbar fled. He fled like the ghost of the desart before the morning's beam. His hosts were not near: and feeble was his arm against thy steel. "Why [p] art thou sad, O "Nathos?" said the lovely maid of Colla.

"I have met," replied the hero, "the battle in my youth. My arm could not lift the spear, when first the danger rose; but my soul brightened before the war, as the green narrow vale, when the sun pours his streamy beams, before he hides his head in a storm. My soul brightened in danger before I saw Selama's fair; before I saw thee like a star that shines on the hill at night; the cloud slowly comes, and threatens the lovely light. We are in the land of the foe, and the winds have deceived us, Dar-thula! the strength of our friends is not near, nor the mountains of Etha. Where shall I find thy peace, daughter of Colla? The brothers of Nathos are brave: and his own sword has shone in war. But what are the sons of Usnoth to the host of car-borne Cairbar! O that the winds had brought thy sails, Oscar [q], king of men! thou didst promise to come to the battles of fallen Cormac. Then would my hand be strong as the flaming arm of death. Cairbar would tremble in his halls, and peace dwell round the lovely Dar-thula. But why dost thou fall, my soul? The sons of Usnoth may prevail."

"And they will prevail, O Nathos," said the rising soul of the maid: "never shall Dar-thula behold the halls of gloomy Cairbar. Give me those arms of brass, that glitter to that passing meteor; I see them in the dark-bosomed ship. Darthula will enter the battle of steel. Ghost of the noble Colla! do I behold thee on that cloud? who is that dim beside thee? It is the car-

p It is usual with Ossian, to repeat, at the end of the episodes, the sentence which introduces them. It brings back the mind of the reader to the main story of the poem.

q Oscar, the son of Ossian, had long resolved on the expedition into Ireland, against Cairbar, who had assassinated his friend Cathol, an Irishman of noble extraction, and in the interest of the family of Cormac.

borne Truthil. Shall I behold the halls of him that slew Selama's chief? No : I will not behold them, spirits of my love!"

Joy rose in the face of Nathos when he heard the white-bosomed maid. "Daughter of Selama! thou shinest on my soul. Come, with thy thousands, Cairbar! the strength of Nathos is returned. And thou, O aged Usnoth, shalt not hear that thy son has fled. I remember thy words on Etha, when thy sails begun to rise: when I spread them towards Ullin, towards the mossy walls of Tura. "Thou goest," he said, "O Nathos, to the king of shields; to Cuchullin, chief of men, who never fled from danger. Let not thine arm be feeble: neither be thy thoughts of flight; lest the son of Semo say that Etha's race are weak. His words may come to Usnoth, and sadden his soul in the hall. The tear was on his cheek. He gave this shining sword."

"I came to Tura's bay: but the halls of Tura were silent. I looked around, and there was none to tell of the chief of Dunscaich. I went to the hall of his shells, where the arms of his fathers hung. But the arms were gone, and aged Lamhor[r] sat in tears. "Whence are the arms of steel?" said the rising Lamhor. "The light of the spear has long been absent from Tura's dusky walls. Come ye from the rolling sea? Or from the mournful halls of Temora[s]."

"We come from the sea," I said, "from Usnoth's rising towers. We are the sons of Slissama[t] the daughter of car-borne Semo. Where is Tura's chief, son of the silent hall? but why should Nathos ask? for I behold thy tears. How did the mighty fall, son of the lonely Tura?"

"He fell not," Lamhor replied, "like the silent star of night, when it shoots through the darkness and is no more. But he was like a meteor that falls in a distant land; death attends its red course, and itself is the sign

r Lamh-mhor, 'mighty hand.'

s Temora was the royal palace of the supreme kings of Ireland. It is here called mournful, on account of the death of Cormac, who was murdered there by Cairbar who usurped his throne.

t Sliss-seamha, 'soft bosom.' She was the wife of Usnoth, and daughter of Semo, the chief of the isle of mist.

of wars. Mournful are the banks of Lego, and the roar of streamy Lara! There the hero fell, son of the noble Usnoth."

"The hero fell in the midst of slaughter," I said with a bursting sigh. "His hand was strong in battle; and death was behind his sword."

"We came to Lego's mournful banks. We found his rising tomb. His companions in battle are there: his bards of many songs. Three days we mourned over the hero: on the fourth, I struck the shield of Caithbat. The heroes gathered around with joy, and shook their beamy spears. Corlath was near with his host, the friend of car-borne Cairbar. We came like a stream by night, and his heroes fell. When the people of the valley rose, they saw their blood by morning's light. But we rolled away like wreaths of mist, to Cormac's echoing hall. Our swords rose to defend the king. But Temora's halls were empty. Cormac had fallen in his youth. The king of Erin was no more.

"Sadness seized the sons of Ullin, they slowly, gloomily, retired: like clouds that, long having threatened rain, retire behind the hills. The sons of Usnoth moved, in their grief, towards Tura's sounding bay. We passed by Selama, and Cairbar retired like Lano's mist, when it is driven by the winds of the desart.

"It was then I beheld thee, O maid, like the light of Etha's son. Lovely is that beam, I said, and the crowded sigh of my bosom rose. Thou camest in thy beauty, Dar-thula, to Etha's mournful chief. But the winds have deceived us, daughter of Colla, and the foe is near."

"Yes! the foe is near," said the rustling strength of Althos[u], "I heard their clanging arms on the coast, and saw the dark wreaths of Erin's standard. Distinct is the voice of Cairbar[v], and loud as Cromla's falling

u Althos had just returned from viewing the coast of Lena, whither he had been sent by Nathos, the beginning of the night.

v Cairbar had gathered an army to the coast of Ulster, in order to oppose Fingal who prepared for an expedition into Ireland, to re-establish the house of Cormac on the throne, which Cairbar had usurped. Between the wings of Cairbar's army was the bay of Tura, into which the ships of the sons of Usnoth were driven; so that there was no possibility of their escaping.

stream. He had seen the dark ship on the sea, before the dusky night came down. His people watch on Lena's plain, and lift ten thousand swords." "And let them lift ten thousand swords," said Nathos with a smile. "The sons of car-borne Usnoth will never tremble in danger. Why dost thou roll with all thy foam, thou rolling sea of Ullin? Why do ye rustle, on your dark wings, ye whistling tempests of the sky? Do ye think, ye storms, that ye keep Nathos on the coast? No: his soul detains him, children of the night! Althos! bring my father's arms: thou seest them beaming to the stars. Bring the spear of Semo[w], it stands in the dark-bosomed ship."

He brought the arms. Nathos clothed his limbs in all their shining steel. The stride of the chief is lovely: the joy of his eyes terrible. He looks towards the coming of Cairbar. The wind is rustling in his hair. Dar-thula is silent at his side: her look is fixed on the chief. She strives to hide the rising sigh, and two tears swell in her eyes.

"Althos!" said the chief of Etha, "I see a cave in that rock. Place Dar-thula there: and let thy arm be strong. Ardan! we meet the foe, and call to battle gloomy Cairbar. O that he came in his sounding steel, to meet the sons of Usnoth. Dar-thula! if thou shalt escape, look not on the falling Nathos. Lift thy sails, O Althos, towards the echoing groves of Etha.

"Tell to the chief[x] that his son fell with fame; that my sword did not shun the battle. Tell him I fell in the midst of thousands, and let the joy of his grief be great. Daughter of Colla! call the maids to Etha's echoing hall. Let their songs arise for Nathos, when shadowy autumn returns. O that the voice of Cona[y] might be heard in my praise? then would my spirit rejoice in the midst of my mountain winds." And my voice shall praise thee, Nathos, chief of the

[w] Semo was grandfather to Nathos by the mother's side. The spear mentioned here was given to Usnoth on his marriage, it being the custom then for the father of the lady to give his arms to his son-in-law. The ceremony used upon these occasions is mentioned in other poems.

[x] Usnoth.

[y] Ossian, the son of Fingal, is often poetically called the voice of Cona.

woody Etha! The voice of Ossian shall rise in thy praise, son of the generous Usnoth! Why was I not on Lena, when the battle rose! Then would the sword of Ossian have defended thee, or himself have fallen low.

We sat, that night, in Selma, round the strength of the shell. The wind was abroad in the oaks, the spirit of the mountain ⁂ shrieked. The blast came rustling through the hall, and gently touched my harp. The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb. Fingal heard it first, and the crowded sighs of his bosom rose. "Some of my heroes are low," said the grey-haired king of Morven. "I hear the sound of death on the harp of my son. Ossian, touch the sounding string; bid their sorrow rise; that their spirits may fly with joy to Morven's woody hills." I touched the harp before the king, the sound was mournful and low. "Bend forward from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend; lay by the red terror of your course, and receive the falling chief; whether he comes from a distant land, or rises from the rolling sea. Let his robe of mist be near; his spear that is formed of a cloud. Place an half-distinguished meteor by his side, in the form of the hero's sword. And oh! let his countenance be lovely, that his friends may delight in his presence. Bend from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend."

Such was my song, in Selma, to the lightly-trembling harp. But Nathos was on Ullin's shore surrounded by the night; he heard the voice of the foe amidst the roar of tumbling waves. Silent he heard their voice, and rested on his spear. Morning rose, with its beams: the sons of Erin appear; like grey rocks, with all their trees, they spread along the coast. Cairbar stood, in the midst, and grimly smiled when he saw the foe. Nathos rushed forward in his strength; nor could Dar-thula stay behind. She came with the hero, lifting her shining spear. And who are these,

⁂ By the spirit of the mountain is meant that deep and melancholy sound which precedes a storm; well known to those who live in a high country.

in their armour, in the pride of youth ? Who but the sons of Usnoth ; Althos, and dark-haired Ardan.

" Come," said Nathos, " come ! chief of the high Temora ! Let our battle be on the coast for the white-bosomed maid ! His people are not with Nathos ! they are behind that rolling sea. Why dost thou bring thy thousands against the chief of Etha? Thou didst fly* from him, in battle, when his friends were around him." " Youth of the heart of pride, shall Erin's king fight with thee ? Thy fathers were not among the renowned, nor of the kings of men. Are the arms of foes in their halls ? or the shields of other times ? Cairbar is renowned in Temora, nor does he fight with little men."

The tear starts from car-borne Nathos ; he turned his eyes to his brothers, their spears flew, at once, and three heroes lay on earth. Then the light of their swords gleamed on high : the ranks of Erin yield ; as a ridge of dark clouds before a blast of wind. Then Cairbar ordered his people ; and they drew a thousand bows. A thousand arrows flew ; the sons of Usnoth fell. They fell like three young oaks which stood alone on the hill ; the traveller saw the lovely trees, and wondered how they grew so lonely : the blast of the desart came, by night, and laid their green heads low ; next day he returned, but they were withered, and the heath was bare.

Dar-thula stood in silent grief, and beheld their fall ; no tear is in her eye : but her look is wildly sad. Pale was her cheek ; her trembling lips broke short an half-formed word. Her dark hair flew on the wind. But gloomy Cairbar came. " Where is thy lover now ; the car-borne chief of Etha ? Hast thou beheld the halls of Usnoth ? or the dark-brown hills of Fingal ? my battle has roared on Morven, did not the winds meet Dar-thula. Fingal himself would have been low, and sorrow dwelling in Selma. Her shield fell from Dar-thula's arm, her breast of snow appeared. It appeared, but it was stained with blood, for an arrow was fixed in her side. She fell on the fallen Nathos, like a

* He alludes to the flight of Cairbar from Selama.

wreath of snow. Her dark hair spreads on his face, and their blood is mixing round.

" Daughter of Colla, thou art low !" said Cairbar's hundred bards ; " silence is at the blue streams of Selama, for Truthil's [b] race have failed. When wilt thou rise in thy beauty, first of Erin's maids? Thy sleep is long in the tomb, and the morning distant far. The sun shall not come to thy bed, and say, " Awake, Darthula ! awake thou first of women ! the wind of spring is abroad. The flowers shake their heads on the green hills, the woods wave their growing leaves." Retire, O sun ; the daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty : she will not move, in the steps of her loveliness."

Such was the song of the bards, when they raised the tomb. I sung, afterwards, over the grave, when the king of Morven came ; when he came to green Ullin to fight with car-borne Cairbar.

[b] Truthil was the founder of Dar-thula's family.

CARRIC-THURA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Fingal, returning from an expedition which he had made into the Roman province, resolved to visit Cathulla, king of Inistore, and brother to Comala, whose story is related, at large, in the dramatic poem published in this collection. Upon his coming in sight of Carric-thura, the palace of Cathulla, he observed a flame on its top, which, in those days, was a signal of distress. The wind drove him into a bay, at some distance from Carric-thura, and he was obliged to pass the night on the shore. Next day he attacked the army of Frothal king of Sora, who had besieged Cathulla in his palace of Carric-thura, and took Frothal himself prisoner, after he had engaged him in a single combat. The deliverance of Carric-thura is the subject of the poem, but several other episodes are interwoven with it. It appears from tradition, that this poem was addressed to a Culdee, or one of the first Christian missionaries, and that the story of the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the ancient Odin of Scandinavia, was introduced by Ossian in opposition to the Culdee's doctrine. Be this as it will, it lets us into Ossian's notions of a superior being; and shows that he was not addicted to the superstition which prevailed over all the world, before the introduction of Christianity.

HAST [a] thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-haired son of the sky! The west has opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is there. The waves come to behold thy beauty; they lift their trembling heads: they see thee lovely in thy sleep; but they shrink away with fear. Rest in thy shadowy cave, O sun! and let thy return be in joy. But let a thousand lights arise to the sound of the harps of Selma: let the beam spread in the hall, the king of shells is returned! The strife of Crona [b] is past, like sounds that are no more: raise the song, O bards, the king is returned with his fame.

Such was the song of Ullin, when Fingal returned from battle: when he returned in the fair blushing of

a The son of Ullin, with which the poem opens, is in a lyric measure. It was usual with Fingal, when he returned from his expeditions, to send his bards singing before him. This species of triumph is called by Ossian, the 'son of victory.'

b Ossian has celebrated the 'strife of Crona,' in a particular poem. This poem is connected with it, but it was impossible for the translator to procure that part which relates to Crona, with any degree of purity.

youth, with all his heavy locks. His blue arms were on the hero; like a grey cloud on the sun, when he moves in his robes of mist, and shows but half his beams. His heroes follow the king: the feast of shells is spread. Fingal turns to his bards, and bids the song to rise.

Voices of echoing Cona! he said, O bards of other times! Ye, on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise! strike the harp in my hall; and let Fingal hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief! it is like the shower of spring, when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf lifts its green head. Sing on, O bards, to-morrow we lift the sail. My blue course is through the ocean, to Carric-thura's walls; the mossy walls of Sarno, where Comala dwelt. There the noble Cathulla spreads the feast of shells. The boars of his woods are many, and the sound of the chase shall arise.

Cronnan[c], son of song! said Ullin, Minona, graceful at the harp! raise the song of Shilric, to please the king of Morven. Let Vinvela come in her beauty, like the showery bow, when it shows its lovely head on the lake, and the setting sun is bright. And she comes, O Fingal! her voice is soft, but sad.

VINVELA. My love is a son of the hill. He pursues the flying deer. His grey dogs are panting around him; his bow-string sounds in the wind. Dost thou rest by the fount of the rock, or by the noise of the mountain-stream? The rushes are nodding with the wind, the mist is flying over the hill. I will approach my love unperceived, and see him from the rock. Lovely! I saw thee first by the aged rock of Branno[d]; thou wert returning, tall, from the chase; the fairest among thy friends.

[c] One should think that the parts of Shilric and Vinvela were represented by Cronnan and Minona, whose very names denote that they were singers, who performed in public. Cronnan signifies a 'mournful sound;' Minona, or Min-'onn, 'soft air.' All the dramatic poems of Ossian appear to have been presented before Fingal, upon solemn occasions.

[d] Bron, or Branno, signifies a mountain-stream; it is here some river known by that name, in the days of Ossian. There are several small rivers in the north of Scotland, still retaining the name of Bran; in particular, one which falls into the Tay, at Dunkeld.

SHIRLIC. What voice is that I hear? that voice like the summer wind. I sit not by the nodding rushes; I hear not the fount of the rock. Afar, Vinvela *e*, afar I go to the wars of Fingal. My dogs attend me no more. No more I tread the hill. No more from on high I see thee, fair-moving by the stream of the plain; bright as the bow of heaven; as the moon on the western wave.

VINVELA. Then thou art gone, O Shilric! and I am alone on the hill. The deer are seen on the brow; void of fear they graze along. No more they dread the wind; no more the rustling tree. The hunter is far removed; he is in the field of graves. Strangers! sons of the waves! spare my lovely Shilric.

SHILRIC. If fall I must in the field, raise high my grave, Vinvela. Grey stones and heaped-up earth, shall mark me to future times. When the hunter shall sit by the mound, and produce his food at noon, "Some warrior rests here," he will say; and my fame shall live in his praise. Remember me, Vinvela, when low on earth I lie!

VINVELA. Yes! I will remember thee; indeed my Shilric will fall. What shall I do, my love! when thou art gone forever. Through these hills I will go at noon: I will go through the silent heath. There I will see the place of thy rest, returning from the chase. Indeed my Shilric will fall; but I will remember him.

And I remember the chief, said the king of woody Morven; he consumed the battle in his rage. But now my eyes behold him not. I met him, one day, on the hill; his cheek was pale; his brow was dark. The sigh was frequent in his breast: his steps were towards the desart. But now he is not in the crowd of my chiefs, when the sounds of my shields arise. Dwells he in the narrow house *f*, the chief of high Carmora *g*?

e Bhin-bdeul, 'a woman with a melodious voice.' Bh in the Gaelic language has the same sound with the V in English.

f The grave.

g Carn-mor, 'high rocky hill.'

Cronnan! said Ullin of other times, raise the song of Shilric; when he returned to his hills, and Vinvela was no more. He leaned on her grey mossy stone; he thought Vinvela lived. He saw her fair-moving [b] on the plain: but the bright form lasted not: the sun-beam fled from the field, and she was seen no more. Hear the song of Shilric; it is soft, but sad.

I sit by the mossy fountain; on the top of the hill of winds. One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath. The lake is troubled below. The deer descend from the hill.. No hunter at a distance is seen; no whistling cow-herd is nigh. It is mid-day: but all is silent. Sad are my thoughts alone. Didst thou but appear, O my love, a wanderer on the heath! thy hair floating on the wind behind thee: thy bosom heaving on the sight; thine eyes full of tears for thy friends whom the mist of the hill had concealed! Thee I would comfort, my love, and bring thee to thy father's house.

But is it she that there appears, like a beam of light on the heath? bright as the moon in autumn, as the sun in a summer storm, comest thou lovely maid, over rocks, over mountains, to me? She speaks: but how weak her voice, like the breeze in the reeds of the pool.

"Returnest thou safe from the war? Where are thy friends, my love? I heard of thy death on the hill; I heard and mourned thee, Shilric!" Yes, my fair, I return; but I alone of my race. Thou shalt see them no more: their graves I raised on the plain. But why art thou on the desart hill? Why on the heath, alone?"

"Alone I am, O Shilric! alone in the winter-house. With grief for thee I expired. Shilric, I am pale in the tomb."

She fleets, she sails away; as grey mist before the wind! and, wilt thou not stay, my love? Stay and be-

[b] The distinction, which the Scots made between good and bad spirits, was, that the former appeared sometimes in the day-time in lonely unfrequented places, but the latter seldom but by night, and always in a gloomy dismal scene.

hold my tears? fair thou appearest Vinvela! fair thou wast, when alive!

By the mossy fountain I will sit; on the top of the hill of winds. When mid-day is silent around, converse, O my love with me! come on the wings of the gale! on the blast of the mountain come! Let me hear thy voice, as thou passest, when mid-day is silent around.

Such was the song of Cronnan, on the night of Selma's joy. But morning rose in the east; the blue waters rolled in light. Fingal bade his sails to rise, and the winds came rustling from their hills. Inistore rose to sight, and Carric-thura's mossy towers. But the sign of distress was on their top: the green flame, edged with smoke. The king of Morven struck his breast: he assumed, at once, his spear. His darkened brow bends forward to the coast: he looks back to the lagging winds. His hair is disordered on his back. The silence of the king is terrible.

Night came down on the sea: Rotha's bay received the ship. A rock bends along the coast with all its echoing wood. On the top is the circle of Loda, [i] and the mossy stone of power. A narrow plain spreads beneath, covered with grass and aged trees, which the midnight winds, in their wrath, had torn from the shaggy rock. The blue course of a stream is there: and the lonely blast of ocean pursues the thistle's beard. The flame of three oaks arose: the feast is spread around: but the soul of the king is sad for Carric-thura's battling chief.

The wan cold moon rose in the east. Sleep descended on the youths. The blue helmets glitter to the beam, the fading fire decays. But sleep did not rest on the king: he rose in the midst of his arms, and slowly ascended the hill to behold the flame of Sarno's tower.

The flame was dim and distant; the moon hid her red face in the east. A blast came from the mountain, and bore, on its wings, the spirit of Loda. He came to

[i] The circle of Loda is supposed to be a place of worship among the Scandinavians, as the spirit of Loda is thought to be the same with their god Odin.

FINGAL
Engaging the Spirit of Loda.
Vide Book Third.

Printed for ... & W. Lowndes ... by C. Buckton, London.

his place in his terrors *k*, and he shook his dusky spear. His eyes appear like flames in his dark face; and his voice is like distant thunder. Fingal advanced with the spear of his strength, and raised his voice on high. Son of night, retire: call thy winds and fly: why dost thou come to my presence with thy shadowy arms? Do I fear thy gloomy form, dismal spirit of Loda? Weak is thy shield of clouds: feeble that meteor, thy sword. The blast rolls them together, and thou thyself dost vanish. Fly from my presence, son of night! call thy winds and fly!

Dost thou force me from my place, replied the hollow voice? The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field of the valiant. I look on the nations, and they vanish: my nostrils pour the blast of death. I come abroad on the winds: the tempests are before my face. But my dwelling is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant.

"Dwell then in thy calm fields, said Fingal, and let Comhal's son be forgot. Do my steps ascend from my hills into thy peaceful plains? Do I meet thee, with a spear on thy cloud, dismal spirit of Loda? Why then dost thou frown on Fingal? or shake thine airy spear? But thou frownest in vain: I never fled from mighty men. And shall the sons of the wind frighten the king of Morven! No: he knows the weakness of their arms.

Fly to thy land, replied the form: receive the wind and fly. The blasts are in the hollow of my hand: the course of the storm is mine. The king of Sora is my son, he bends at the stone of my power. His battle is around Carric-thura; and he will prevail. Fly to thy land, son of Comhal, or feel my flaming wrath.

He lifted high his shadowy spear; and bent forward his terrible height. But the king, advancing, drew his sword; the blade of dark-brown Luno *l*. The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into air, like a column of smoke,

k He is described, in a simile, in the poem concerning the death of Cuthullin.
l The famous sword of Fingal, made by Lun, or Luno, a smith of Lochlin.

which the staff of the boy disturbs, as it rises from the half-extinguished furnace.

The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind. Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep: they stopped, in their course, with fear: the companions of Fingal started, at once; and took their heavy spears. They missed the king; they rose with rage: all their arms resound.

The moon came forth in the east. The king returned in the gleam of his arms. The joy of his youths was great; their souls settled, as a sea from a storm. Ullin raised the song of gladness. The hills of Inistore rejoiced. The flame of the oak arose; and the tales of heroes are told.

But Frothal, Sora's battling king, sits in sadness beneath a tree; the host spreads around Carric-thura. He looks towards the walls with rage. He longs for the blood of Cathulla, who once overcame the king in war. When Annir reigned[m] in Sora, the father of carborne Frothal, a blast rose on the sea, and carried Frothal to Inistore. Three days he feasted in Sarno's halls, and saw the slow-rolling eyes of Comala. He loved her, in the rage of youth, and rushed to seize the white-armed maid. Cathulla met the chief. The gloomy battle rose. Frothal is bound in the hall: three days he pined alone. On the fourth, Sarno sent him to his ship, and he returned to his land. But wrath darkened his soul against the noble Cathulla. When Annir's stone[n] of fame arose, Frothal came in his strength. The battle burned round Carric-thura, and Sarno's mossy walls.

Morning rose on Inistore. Frothal struck his dark-brown shield. His chiefs started at the sound; they stood, but their eyes were turned to the sea. They saw Fingal coming in his strength; and first the noble Thubar spoke.

m Annir was also the father of Erragon, who was killed after the death of his brother Frothal. The death of Erragon is the subject of the battle of Lora, a poem in this collection.

n That is, after the death of Annir. To erect the stone of one's fame, was, in other words, to say that the person was dead.

"Who comes like the stag of the mountain, with all his herd behind him? Frothal, it is a foe; I see his forward spear. Perhaps it is the king of Morven, Fingal, the first of men. His actions are well known on Gormal; the blood of his foes is in Sarno's halls. Shall I ask the peace[o] of kings? He is like the thunder of heaven."

"Son of the feeble hand," said Frothal, "shall my days begin in darkness? Shall I yield before I have conquered in battle, chief of streamy Tora? The people would say in Sora, Frothal flew forth like a meteor; but the dark cloud met it, and it is no more. No: Thubar, I will never yield; my fame shall surround me like light. No: I will never yield, king of streamy Tora."

He went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock: Fingal stood unmoved, broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they roll in safety; the spear of the king pursued their flight. The field is covered with heroes. A rising hill preserved the flying host.

Frothal saw their flight. The rage of his bosom rose. He bent his eyes to the ground, and called the noble Thubar. "Thubar! my people fled. My fame has ceased to rise. I will fight the king; I feel my burning soul. Send a bard to demand the combat. Speak not against Frothal's words. But, Thubar! I love a maid; she dwells by Thano's stream, the white-bosomed daughter of Herman, Utha with the softly-rolling eyes. She feared the daughter[p] of Inistore, and her soft sighs rose at my departure. Tell to Utha that I am low; but that my soul delighted in her."

Such were his words, resolved to fight. But the soft sigh of Utha was near. She had followed her hero over the sea, in the armour of a man. She rolled her eye on the youth, in secret, from beneath a glittering helmet. But now she saw the bard as he went, and

o Honourable terms of peace.

p By the daughter of Inistore, Frothal means Comala, of whose death Utha probably had not heard, consequently she feared that the former passion of Frothal for Comala might return.

the spear fell thrice from her hand. Her loose hair flew on the wind. Her white breast rose, with sighs. She lifted up her eyes to the king; she would speak, but thrice she failed.

Fingal heard the words of the bard; he came in the strength of steel. They mixed their deathful spears, and raise the gleam of their swords. But the steel of Fingal descended and cut Frothal's shield in twain. His fair side is exposed; half-bent he foresees his death.

Darkness gathered on Utha's soul. The tear rolled down her cheek. She rushed to cover the chief with her shield; but a fallen oak met her steps. She fell on her arm of snow; her shield, her helmet flew wide. Her white-bosom heaved to the sight; her dark-brown hair is spread on earth.

Fingal pitied the white-armed maid: he stayed the uplifted sword. The tear was in the eye of the king, as, bending forward, he spoke. "King of streamy Sora! fear not the sword of Fingal. It was never stained with the blood of the vanquished; it never pierced a fallen foe. Let thy people rejoice along the blue waters of Tora: let the maids of thy love be glad. Why shouldst thou fall in thy youth, king of streamy Sora?"

Frothal heard the words of Fingal, and saw the rising maid: they[g] stood in silence, in their beauty; like two young trees of the plain, when the shower of spring is on their leaves, and the loud winds are laid.

"Daughter of Herman," said Frothal, "didst thou come from Tora's streams; didst thou come, in thy beauty, to behold thy warrior low? But he was low before the mighty, maid of the slow-rolling eye! The feeble did not overcome the son of car-borne Annir. Terrible art thou, O king of Morven! in battles of the spear. But, in peace, thou art like the sun, when he looks through a silent shower: the flowers lift their fair heads before him; and the gales shake their rustling wings. O that thou wert in Sora! that my feast were spread! The future kings of Sora would see thy

[g] Frothal and Utha.

arms and rejoice. They would rejoice at the fame of their fathers, who beheld the mighty Fingal."

"Son of Annir," replied the king, "the fame of Sora's race shall be heard. When chiefs are strong in battle, then does the song arise! But if their swords are stretched over the feeble: if the blood of the weak has stained their arms; the bard shall forget them in the song, and their tomb shall not be known. The stranger shall come and build there, and remove the heaped-up earth. An half-worn sword shall rise before him; and bending above it he will say, "These are the arms of chiefs of old, but their names are not in song. Come thou, O Frothal, to the feast of Inistore; let the maid of thy love be there: and our faces will brighten with joy."

Fingal took his spear, moving in the steps of his might. The gates of Carric-thura are opened. The feast of shells is spread. The voice of music arose. Gladness brightened in the hall. The voice of Ullin was heard; the harp of Selma was strung. Utha rejoiced in his presence, and demanded the song of grief; the big tear hung in her eye, when the soft Crimora[r] spoke; Crimora the daughter of Rinval, who dwelt at Lotha's[s] mighty stream. The tale was long, but lovely; and pleased the blushing maid of Tora.

Crimora[t]. Who cometh from the hill, like a cloud tinged with the beam of the west! Whose voice is that, loud as the wind, but pleasant as the harp of Carril[u]? It is my love in the light of steel; but sad is his darkened brow. Live the mighty race of Fingal? or what disturbs my Connal[v]?

r There is a propriety in introducing this episode, as the situation of Crimora and Utha were so similar.

s Lotha was the ancient name of one of the great rivers in the north of Scotland. The only one of them that still retains a name of a like sound is Lochy, in Inverness-shire; but whether it is the river mentioned here, the translator will not pretend to say.

t Crimora, 'a woman of great soul.'

u Perhaps the Carril mentioned here is the same with Carril the son of Kinfena, Cuthullin's bard. The name itself is proper to any bard, as it signifies a sprightly and harmonious sound.

v Connal, the son of Diaran, was one of the most famous heroes of Fingal; he was slain in a battle against Dargo, a Briton; but whether by the hand of the enemy, or that of his mistress, tradition does not determine.

CONNAL. They live. I saw them return from the chase, like a stream of light. The sun was on their shields. Like a ridge of fire they descended the hill. Loud is the voice of my youth: the war, my love, is near. To-morrow the terrible Dargo comes to try the force of our race. The race of Fingal he defies; the race of battle and wounds.

CRIMORA. Connal, I saw his sails, like grey mist on the sable wave. They slowly came to land. Connal, many are the warriors of Dargo!

CONNAL. Bring me thy father's shield: the bossy, iron shield of Rinval; that shield like the full moon when it moves darkened through heaven.

CRIMORA. That shield I bring, O Connal; but it did not defend my father. By the spear of Gormar he fell. Thou mayest fall, O Connal!

CONNAL. Fall indeed I may: but raise my tomb, Crimora. Grey stones, a mound of earth, shall keep my memory. Bend thy red eye over my tomb, and beat thy mournful heaving breast. Though fair thou art, my love, as the light; more pleasant than the gale of the hill; yet I will not stay. Raise my tomb, Crimora.

CRIMORA. Then give me those arms of light; that sword, and that spear of steel. I shall meet Dargo with thee, and aid my lovely Connal. Farewel, ye rocks of Ardven! ye deer! and ye streams of the hill! We shall return no more. Our tombs are distant far.

"And did they return no more?" said Utha's bursting sigh. "Fell the mighty in battle, and did Crimora live? Her steps were lonely, and her soul was sad for Connal. Was he not young and lovely; like the beam of the setting sun? Ullin saw the virgin's tear, and took the softly trembling harp: the song was lovely, but sad; and silence was in Carric-thura.

Autumn is dark on the mountains; grey mist rests on the hills. The whirlwind is heard on the heath. Dark rolls the river through the narrow plain. A tree stands alone on the hill, and marks the slumbering Connal. The leaves whirl round with the wind, and

strew the grave of the dead. At times are seen here the ghosts of the deceased, when the musing hunter alone stalks slowly over the heath.

Who can reach the source of thy race, O Connal? and who recount thy fathers? Thy family grew like an oak on the mountain, which meeteth the wind with its lofty head. But now it is torn from the earth. Who shall supply the place of Connal? Here was the din of arms! and here the groans of the dying. Bloody are the wars of Fingal! O Connal! it was here thou didst fall. Thine arm was like a storm; thy sword a beam of the sky; thy height, a rock on the plain; thine eyes, a furnace of fire. Louder than a storm was thy voice, in the battles of thy steel. Warriors fell by thy sword, as the thistle by the staff of a boy. Dargo the mighty came on, like a cloud of thunder. His brows were contracted and dark. His eyes like two caves in a rock. Bright rose their swords on each side; dire was the clang of their steel.

The daughter of Rinval was near; Crimora bright in the armour of man; her yellow hair is loose behind, her bow in her hand. She followed the youth to the war, Connal, her much beloved. She drew the string on Dargo; but erring, pierced her Connal. He falls like an oak on the plain: like a rock from the shaggy hill. What shall she do, hapless maid? He bleeds; her Connal dies. All the night long she cries, and all the day, "O Connal, my love, and my friend!" With grief the sad mourner dies. Earth here incloses the loveliest pair on the hill. The grass grows between the stones of the tomb; I often sit in the mournful shade. The wind sighs through the grass; their memory rushes on my mind. Undisturbed you now sleep together; in the tomb of the mountain you rest alone.

"And soft be your rest," said Utha, "children of streamy Lotha. I will remember you with tears, and my secret song shall rise; when the wind is in the groves of Tora, and the stream is roaring near. Then shall ye come on my soul, with all your lovely grief."

Three days feasted the kings: on the fourth, their

white sails arose. The winds of the north carry the ship of Fingal to Morven's woody land. Bnt the spirit of Loda, sat in his cloud, behind the ships of Frothal. He hung forward with all his blasts, and spread the white-bosomed sails. The wounds of his form were not forgot; he still feared[w] the hand of the king.

[w] The story of Fingal and the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the famous Odin, is the most extravagant fiction in all Ossian's poems. It is not, however, without precedents in the best poets; and it must be said for Ossian, that he says nothing but what perfectly agreed with the notions of the times, concerning ghosts. They thought the souls of the dead were material and consequently susceptible of pain. Whether a proof could be drawn from this passage, that Ossian had no notion of a divinity, I shall leave for others to determine: it appears, however, that he was of opinion, that superior beings ought to take no notice of what passed among men.

THE

SONGS OF SELMA.

The Argument.

This poem fixes the antiquity of a custom, which is well known to have prevailed, afterwards, in the north of Scotland, and in Ireland. The bards, at an annual feast, provided by the king or chief, repeated their poems; and such of them as were thought, by him, worthy of being preserved, were carefully taught to their children, in order to have them transmitted to posterity. It was one of those occasions that afforded the subject of the present poem to Ossian. It is called in the original, The Songs of Selma, which title it was thought proper to adopt in the translation.

The poem is entirely lyric, and has great variety of versification. The address to the evening star, with which it opens, has, in the original, all the harmony that numbers could give it; flowing down with all that tranquillity and softness, which the scene described naturally inspires.

STAR of the descending night! fair is thy light in the west! thou liftest thy unshorn head from thy cloud: thy steps are stately on thy hill. What dost thou behold in the plain? The stormy winds are laid. The murmur of the torrent comes from afar. Roaring waves climb the distant rock. The flies of evening are on their feeble wings, and the hum of their course is on the field. What dost thou behold, fair light? But thou dost smile and depart. The waves come with joy around thee, and bathe thy lovely hair. Farewell, thou silent beam! Let the light of Ossian's soul arise.

And it does arise in its strength! I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Lora, as in the days that are past. Fingal came like a watery column of mist: his heroes are around. And see the bards of the song, grey-haired Ullin; stately Ryno; Alpin[a], with the tuneful voice, and the soft complaint of Mi-

a Alpin is from the same root with Albion, or rather Albin, the ancient name of Britain: Ald, 'high in land, or country.' The present name of our island has its origin in the Celtic tongue; so that those who derived it from any other betrayed their ignorance of the ancient language of our country. Britain comes from Breact-in, 'variegated island,' so called from the face of the country, from the natives painting themselves, or from their party-coloured clothes.

nona! How are ye changed, my friends, since the days of Selma's feast! when we contended, like the gales of the spring, that, flying over the hill, by turns bend the feebly-whistling grass.

Minona then came forth in her beauty; with downcast look and tearful eye; her hair flew slowly on the blast that rushed unfrequent from the hill. The souls of the heroes were sad when she raised the tuneful voice: for often had they seen the grave of Salgar[b], and the dark dwelling of white-bosomed Colma[c]. Colma left alone on the hill, with all her voice of music! Salgar promised to come: but the night descended round. Hear the voice of Colma, when she sat alone on the hill!

Colma. It is night; I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent shrieks down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds.

Rise, moon! from behind thy clouds; stars of the night appear! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the toil of the chase; his bow near him, unstrung; his dogs panting around him. But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar, nor can I hear the voice of my love. Why delays my Salgar, why the son of the hill, his promise? Here is the rock, and the tree; and here the roaring stream. Thou didst promise with night to be here. Ah! whither is my Salgar gone? With thee would I fly, my father; with thee, my brother of pride. Our race have long been foes; but we are not foes, O Salgar!

Cease a little while, O wind! Stream, be thou silent a while! let my voice be heard over the heath; let my wanderer hear me. Salgar! it is I who call. Here is the tree and the rock. Salgar, my love! I am here. Why delayest thou thy coming? Lo! the moon appeareth. The flood is bright in the vale. The rocks are grey on the face of the hill. But I see him not on the brow; his dogs before him tell not that he is coming. Here I must sit alone.

b Scalg-'er, 'a hunter.' c Cul-math, 'woman with fine hair.'

But who are these that lie beyond me on the heath? Are they my love and my brother? Speak to me, O my friends! They answer not. My soul is tormented with fears. Ah! they are dead. Their swords are red from the fight. O my brother! my brother! why hast thou slain my Salgar? Why, O Salgar! hast thou slain my brother? Dear were ye both to me! What shall I say in your praise? Thou wert fair on the hill among thousands; he was terrible in fight. Speak to me; hear my voice, sons of my love! But alas! they are silent; silent for ever! Cold are their breasts of clay! Oh! from the rock of the hill, from the top of the windy mountain, speak, ye ghosts of the dead! speak, I will not be afraid. Whither are ye gone to rest? In what cave of the hill shall I find you? No feeble voice is on the wind: no answer half-drowned in the storms of the hill.

I sit in my grief. I wait for morning in my tears! Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead: but close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream: why should I stay behind! Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill; when the wind is on the heath; my ghost shall stand in the wind, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth. He shall fear, but love my voice. For sweet shall my voice be for my friends; for pleasant were they both to me.

Such was thy song, Minona, softly-blushing maid of Torman. Our tears descended for Colma, and our souls were sad. Ullin came with the harp, and gave the song of Alpin. The voice of Alpin was pleasant; the soul of Ryno was a beam of fire. But they had rested in the narrow house: and their voice was not heard in Selma. Ullin had returned one day from the chase, before the heroes fell. He heard their strife on the hill; the song was soft, but sad. They mourned the fall of Morar, first of mortal men. His soul was like the soul of Fingal; his sword like the sword of Oscar. But he fell, and his father mourned: his sister's eye

were full of tears. Minona's eyes were full of tears, the sister of car-borne Morar. She retired from the song of Ullin, like the moon in the west, when she foresees the shower, and hides her fair head in a cloud. I touched the harp with Ullin; the song of mourning rose.

Ryno. The wind and the rain are over: calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill. Sweet are thy murmurs, O stream! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead. Bent is his head of age, and red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, why alone on the silent hill? why complainest thou, as a blast in the wood? as a wave on the lonely shore?

Alpin. My tears, O Ryno! are for the dead; my voice for the inhabitants of the grave. Tall thou art on the hill; fair among the sons of the plain. But thou shalt fall like Morar[d]; and the mourner shall sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more; thy bow shall lie in the hall unstrung.

Thou wert swift, O Morar! as a roe on the hill: terrible as a meteor of fire. Thy wrath was as the storm. Thy sword in battle, as lightning in the field. Thy voice was like a stream after rain; like thunder on distant hills. Many fell by thy arm; they were consumed in the flames of thy wrath. But when thou didst return from war, how peaceful was thy brow! Thy face was like the sun after rain! like the moon in the silence of night; calm as the breast of the lake when the loud wind is laid.

Narrow is thy dwelling now; dark the place of thine abode. With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before! Four stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter's eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar, thou art low indeed. Thou

[d] Mor-er, 'great man.'

hast no mother to mourn thee; no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan.

Who on his staff is this! who is this whose head is white with age, whose eyes are red with tears, who quakes at every step! It is thy father[e], O Morar! the father of no son but thee. He heard of thy fame in battle; he heard of foes dispersed. He heard of Morar's fame; why did he not hear of his wound? Weep, thou father of Morar; weep; but thy son heareth thee not. Deep is the sleep of the dead; low their pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice; no more shall he awake at thy call. When shall it be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake? Farewell, thou bravest of men! thou conqueror in the field! but the field shall see thee no more; nor the dark wood be lightened with the splendour of thy steel. Thou hast left no son. But the song shall preserve thy name. Future times shall hear of thee; they shall hear of the fallen Morar.

The grief of all arose, but most the bursting sigh of Armin[f]. He remembers the death of his son, who fell in the days of his youth. Carmor[g] was near the hero, the chief of the echoing Galmal. Why bursts the sigh of Armin? he said; is there a cause to mourn? The song comes, with its music, to melt and please the soul. It is like soft mist, that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale; the green flowers are filled with dew, but the sun returns in his strength, and the mist is gone. Why art thou sad, O Armin, chief of the sea-surrounded Gorma?

Sad I am indeed: nor small my cause of woe! Carmor, thou hast lost no son; thou hast lost no daughter of beauty. Colgar the valiant lives; and Annira, fairest maid. The bows of thy family flourish, O Carmor but Armin is the last of his race. Dark is thy bed, O

e Torman, the son of Carthul, lord of I-mora, one of the western isles.
f Armin, 'a hero.' He was chief, or petty king of Gorma, i. e. 'the blue island;' supposed to be one of the Hebrides.
g Cear-mor, 'a tall dark-complexioned man.'

Daura! and deep thy sleep in the tomb. When shalt thou awake with thy song? with all thy voice of music?

Arise, winds of autumn, arise; blow upon the dark heath! streams of the mountains, roar! howl, ye tempests, in the top of the oak! walk through broken clouds, O moon! show by intervals thy pale face! bring to my mind that sad night, when all my children fell; when Arindal the mighty fell; when Daura the lovely failed. Daura, my daughter! thou wert fair; fair as the moon on the hills of Fura[h]; white as the driven snow; sweet as the breathing gale. Arindal, thy bow was strong, thy spear was swift in the field: thy look was like mist on the wave; thy shield a red cloud in a storm. Armar renowned in war, came, and sought Daura's love; he was not long denied; fair was the hope of their friends.

Erath, son of Ogdal, repined; for his brother was slain by Armar. He came disguised like a son of the sea: fair was his skiff on the wave; white his locks of age; calm his serious brow. Fairest of women, he said, lovely daughter of Armin! A rock not distant in the sea, bears a tree on its side; red shines the fruit afar. There Armar waits for Daura. I came to carry his love along the rolling sea. She went; and she called on Armar. Nought answered, but the son[i] of the rock. Armar, my love! my love! why tormentest thou me with fear? hear, son of Ardnart, hear: it is Daura who calleth thee! Erath the traitor fled laughing to the land. She lifted up her voice, and cried for her brother and her father. Arindal! Armin! none to relieve your Daura!

Her voice came over the sea. Arindal my son descended from the hill; rough in the spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side; his bow was in his hand: five dark-grey dogs attended his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore; he seized and bound him to an

h Fua-ra, 'cold island.'

i By the son of the rock, the poet means the echoing back of the human voice from a rock. The vulgar were of opinion, that this repetition of sound was made by a spirit within the rock; and they, on that account, called it 'mac-talla, the son who dwells in the rock.'

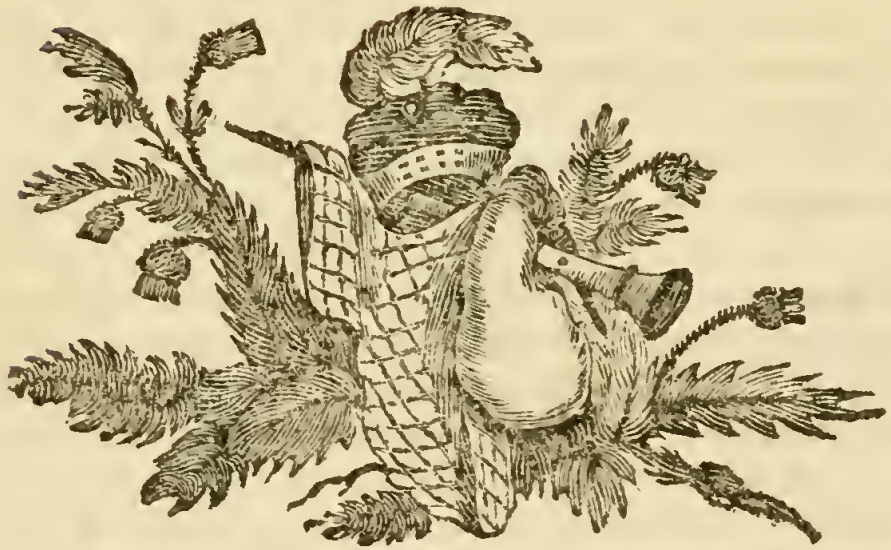
oak. Thick bend the thongs[k] of the hide around his limbs; he loaded the wind with his groans. Arindal ascends the wave in his boat, to bring Daura to land. Armar came in his wrath, and let fly the grey-feathered shaft. It sung; it sunk in thy heart. O Arindal, my son! for Erath the traitor thou diedst. The oar is stopped at once: he panted on the rock and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood? The boat is broken in twain by the waves. Armar plunges into the sea, to rescue his Daura, or die. Sudden a blast from the hill comes over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more.

Alone, on the sea-beat rock, my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind; and the rain beat hard on the side of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak. It died away, like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief she expired, and left thee, Armin, alone. Gone is my strength in the war, and fallen my pride among women. When the storms of the mountain come; when the north lifts the waves on high: I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon I see the ghosts of my children. Half-viewless, they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you speak in pity? They do not regard their father. I am sad, O Carmor, nor small is my cause of woe!

Such were the words of the bards in the days of song; when the king heard the music of harps, and the tales of other times. The chiefs gathered from all their hills, and heard the lovely sound. They praised the voice[l] of Cona! the first among a thousand bards. But age is now on my tongue: and my soul has failed. I hear sometimes the ghosts of bards, and learn their pleasant song. But memory fails in my mind: I hear the call

[k] The poet here only means that Erath was bound with leathern thongs.
[l] Ossian is sometimes poetically called the voice of Cona.

of years. They say, as they pass along, why does Ossian sing? Soon shall he lie in the narrow house, and no bard shall raise his fame. Roll on, ye dark-brown years, for ye bring no joy on your course. Let the tomb open to Ossian, for his strength has failed. The sons of song are gone to rest: my voice remains, like a blast, that roars, lonely, on a sea-surrounded rock, after the winds are laid. The dark moss whistles there, and the distant mariner sees the waving trees.



CALTHON AND COLMAL:

A POEM.

The Argument.

This piece, as many more of Ossian's compositions, is addressed to one of the first Christian missionaries. The story of the poem is handed down by tradition, thus: In the country of the Britons, between the walls, two chiefs lived in the days of Fingal, Dunthalmo, lord of Teutha, supposed to be the Tweed; and Rathmor, who dwelt at Clutha, well known to be the river Clyde. Rathmor was not more renowned for his generosity and hospitality, than Dunthalmo was infamous for his cruelty and ambition. Dunthalmo, through envy, or on account of some private feuds which subsisted between the families, murdered Rathmor at a feast; but being afterwards touched with remorse, he educated the two sons of Rathmor, Calthon and Colmar, in his own house. They, growing up to man's estate, dropped some hints that they intended to revenge the death of their father, upon which Dunthalmo shut them up in two caves on the banks of Teutha, intending to take them off privately. Colmal the daughter of Dunthalmo, who was secretly in love with Calthon, helped him to make his escape from prison, and fled with him to Fingal, disguised in the habit of a young warrior, and implored his aid against Dunthalmo. Fingal sent Ossian with three hundred men, to Colmar's relief. Dunthalmo having previously murdered Colmar, came to a battle with Ossian; but he was killed by that hero, and his army totally defeated.

Calthon married Colmal his deliverer; and Ossian returned to Morven.

PLEASANT is the voice of thy song, thou lonely dweller of the rock. It comes on the sound of the stream, along the narrow vale. My soul awakes, O stranger! in the midst of my hall. I stretch my hand to the spear, as in the days of other years. I stretch my hand, but it is feeble; and the sigh of my bosom grows. Wilt thou not listen, son of the rock, to the song of Ossian? My soul is full of other times; the joy of my youth returns. Thus the sun appears in the west, after the steps of his brightness have moved behind a storm; the green hills lift their dewy heads: the blue streams rejoice in the vale. the aged hero comes forth on his staff, and his grey hair glitters in the beam. Dost thou not behold, son of the rock, a shield in Ossian's hall? It is marked with the strokes of battle; and the brightness of its bosses has failed. That shield the great Dunthalmo bore, the chief of streamy Teutha. Dunthalmo bore in bat-

tle, before he fell by Ossian's spear. Listen, son of the rock, to the tale of other years.

Rathmor was a chief of Clutha. The feeble dwelt in his hall. The gates of Rathmor were never closed: his feast was always spread. The sons of the stranger came, and blest the generous chief of Clutha. Bards raised the song, and touched the harp: and joy brightened on the face of the mournful. Dunthalmo came, in his pride, and rushed into the combat of Rathmor. The chief of Clutha overcame; the rage of Dunthalmo rose. He came, by night, with his warriors; and the mighty Rathmor fell. He fell in his halls, where his feast was often spread for strangers.

Colmar and Calthon were young, the sons of car-borne Rathmor. They came, in the joy of youth, into their father's hall. They behold him in his blood, and their bursting tears descend. The soul of Dunthalmo melted, when he saw the children of youth; he brought them to Alteutha's [a] walls; they grew in the house of the foe. They bent the bow in his presence; and came forth to his battles. They saw the fallen walls of their fathers; they saw the green thorn in the hall. Their tears descended in secret: and, at times, their faces were mournful. Dunthalmo beheld their grief: his darkening soul designing their death. He closed them in two caves, on the echoing banks of Teutha. The sun did not come there with his beams; nor the moon of heaven by night. The sons of Rathmor remained in darkness, and foresaw their death.

The daughter of Dunthalmo wept in silence, the fair-haired, blue-eyed Colmal[b]. Her eye had rolled in secret on Calthon; his loveliness swelled in her soul. She trembled for her warrior; but what could Colmal do? Her arm could not lift the spear; nor was the sword formed for her side. Her white breast never

a Al-teutha, or rather Balteutha, 'the town of Tweed,' Dunthalmo's seat. It is observable, that all the names in this poem, are derived from the Gaelic language; which, as I have remarked in a preceding note, is a proof that it was once the universal language of the whole island.

b Caol-mhal, 'a woman with small eye brows;' small eye-brows were a distinguishing part of beauty in Ossian's time; and he seldom fails to give them to the fine women of his poems.

rose beneath a mail. Neither was her eye the terror of heroes. What canst thou do, O Colmal! for the falling chief? Her steps are unequal, her hair is loose: her eye looks wildly through her tears. She came, by night, to the hall [c]; and armed her lovely form in steel; the steel of a young warrior, who fell in the first of his battles. She came to the cave of Calthon, and loosed the thongs from his hands.

"Arise, son of Rathmor," she said, "arise, the night is dark. Let us fly to the king of Selma [d], chief of fallen Clutha! I am the son of Lamgal, who dwelt in thy father's hall. I heard of thy dark dwelling in the cave, and my soul arose. Arise, son of Rathmor, for the night is dark." "Blessed voice!" replied the chief, "comest thou from the darkly-rolling clouds? for often the ghost of his fathers descend to Calthon's dreams, since the sun has retired from his eyes, and darkness has dwelt around him. Or art thou the son of Lamgal, the chief I often saw in Clutha? But shall I fly to Fingal, and Colmar my brother low? shall I fly to Morven, and the hero closed in night? No: give me that spear, son of Lamgal, Calthon will defend his brother."

"A thousand warriors," replied the maid, "stretch their spears round car-borne Colmar. What can Calthon do against a host so great? Let us fly to the king of Morven, he will come with battle. His arm is stretched forth to the unhappy, the lightning of his sword is round the weak. Arise, thou son of Rathmor; the shades of night will fly away. Dunthalmo will behold thy steps, on the field, and thou must fall in thy youth."

The sighing hero rose; his tears descended for car-borne Colmar. He came with the maid to Selma's hall; but he knew not that it was Colmal. The helmet covered her lovely face; and her breast rose be-

c That is, the hall where the arms taken from enemies were hung up as trophies. Ossian is very careful to make his stories probable; for he makes Comhal put on the arms of a youth killed in battle, as more proper for a young woman, who cannot be supposed strong enough to carry the armour of a full grown warrior.

d Fingal.

neath the steel. Fingal returned from the chase, and found the lovely strangers. They were like two beams of light in the midst of the hall. The king heard the tale of grief; and turned his eyes around. A thousand heroes half-rose before him; claiming the war of Teutha. I came with my spear from the hill, and the joy of battle rose in my breast: for the king spoke to Ossian in the midst of the people.

"Son of my strength," he said, "take the spear of Fingal; go to Teutha's mighty stream and save the car-borne Colmar. Let thy fame return before thee, like a pleasant gale; that my soul may rejoice over my son, who renews the renown of our fathers. Ossian! be thou a storm in battle; but mild when the foes are low: It was thus my fame arose, O my son; and be thou like Selma's chief. When the haughty come to my halls, my eyes behold them not. But my arm is stretched forth to the unhappy. My sword defends the weak."

I rejoiced in the words of the king: and took my rattling arms. Diaran [e] rose at my side, and Dargo [f] king of spears. Three hundred youths followed our steps; the lovely strangers were at my side. Dunthalmo heard the sound of our approach; he gathered the strength of Teutha. He stood on a hill with his host; they were

[e] Diaran, father of that Connal who was unfortunately killed by Crimora, his mistress.

[f] Dargo, the son of Collath, is celebrated in other poems by Ossian. He is said to have been killed by a boar at a hunting party. The lamentation of his mistress, or wife, Mingala, over his body, is extant: but whether it is of Ossian's composition, I cannot determine. It is generally ascribed to him, and has much of his manner; but some traditions mention it as an imitation by some later bard. As it has some poetical merit, I have subjoined it.

"The spouse of Dargo came in tears: for Dargo was no more! The heroes sigh over Lartho's chief: and what shall sad Mingala do? The dark soul vanished like morning mist, before the king of spears: but the generous glowed in his presence like the morning star.

Who was the fairest and most lovely? Who but Collath's stately son? Who sat in the midst of the wise, but Dargo of the mighty deeds?

Thy hand touched the trembling harp: Thy voice was soft as summer winds. Alas me! What shall the heroes say? For Dargo fell before a boar. Pale is the lovely cheek: the look of which was firm in danger! Why hast thou failed on our hills, thou fairer than the beams of the sun?

The daughter of Adonfion was lovely in the eyes of the valiant: she was lovely in their eyes, but she chose to be the spouse of Dargo.

But thou art alone, Mingala! the night is coming with its clouds; where is the bed of thy repose? Where but in the tomb of Dargo?

Why dost thou lift the stone, O bard? why dost thou shut the narrow house? Mingala's eyes are heavy, bard! She must sleep with Dargo.

Last night I heard the song of joy in Lartho's lofty hall. But silence now dwells around my bed. Mingala rests with Dargo.

like rocks broken with thunder, when their bent trees are singed and bare, and the streams of their chinks have failed.

The stream of Teutha rolled, in its pride, before the gloomy foe. I sent a bard to Dunthalmo to offer the combat on the plain; but he smiled in the darkness of his pride. His unsettled host moved on the hill; like the mountain cloud, when the blast has entered its womb, and scatters the curling gloom on every side.

They brought Colmar to Teutha's bank, bound with a thousand thongs. The chief is sad, but lovely, and his eye is on his friends; for we stood, in our arms, on the opposite banks of Teutha. Dunthalmo came with his spear, and pierced the hero's side: he rolled on the bank in his blood, and we heard his broken sighs.

Calthon rushed into the stream: I bounded forward on my spear. Teutha's race fell before us. Night came rolling down. Dunthalmo rested on a rock, amidst an aged wood. The rage of his bosom burned against the car-borne Calthon. But Calthon stood in his grief; he mourned the fallen Colmar; Colmar slain in youth before his fame arose.

I bade the song of woe to rise, to soothe the mournful chief: but he stood beneath a tree, and often threw his spear on earth. The humid eye of Colmal rolled near in a secret tear: she foresaw the fall of Dunthalmo, or of Clutha's battling chief.

Now half the night had passed away. Silence and darkness were on the field: sleep rested on the eyes of the heroes: Calthon's settling soul was still. His eyes were half closed; but the murmur of Teutha had not yet failed in his ear. Pale, and showing his wounds, the ghost of Colmar came: he bended his head over the hero, and raised his feeble voice.

"Sleeps the son of Rathmor in his might, and his brother low? Did we not rise to the chase together, and pursue the dark-brown hinds? Colmar was not forgot till he fell; till death had blasted his youth. I lie pale beneath the rock of Lona. O let Calthon rise! the morning comes with its beams; and Dunthalmo will

dishonour the fallen." He passed away in his blast. The rising Calthon saw the steps of his departure. He rushed in the sound of his steel, and unhappy Colmal rose. She followed her hero through night, and dragged her spear behind. But when Calthon came to Lona's rock, he found his fallen brother. The rage of his bosom rose, and he rushed among the foe. The groans of death ascend. They close around the chief. He is bound in the midst, and brought to gloomy Dunthalmo. The shout of joy arose; and the hills of night replied.

I started at the sound: and took my father's spear. Diaran rose at my side; and the youthful strength of Dargo. We missed the chief of Clutha; and our souls were sad. I dreaded the departure of my fame; the pride of my valour rose. "Sons of Morven," I said, "it is not thus our fathers fought. They rested not on the field of strangers, when the foe did not fall before them. Their strength was like the eagles of heaven their renown is in the song. But our people fall by degrees, and our fame begins to depart. What shall the king of Morven say, if Ossian conquers not at Teutha? Rise in your steel, ye warriors, and follow the sound of Ossian's course. He will not return, but renowned, to the echoing walls of Selma."

Morning rose on the blue waters of Teutha; Colma stood before me in tears. She told of the chief of Clutha: and thrice the spear fell from her hand. My wrath turned against the stranger; for my soul trembled for Calthon. "Son of the feeble hand," I said, do Teutha's warriors fight with tears? The battle is not won with grief; nor dwells the sigh in the soul of war. Go to the deer of Carmun, or the lowing herds of Teutha. But leave these arms, thou son of fear; a warrior may lift them in battle."

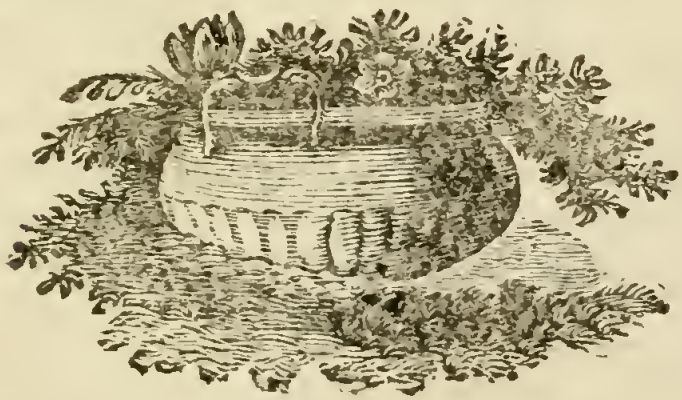
I tore the mail from her shoulders. Her snowy breast appeared. She bent her red face to the ground. I looked in silence to the chiefs. The spear fell from my hand; and the sigh of my bosom rose. But when I heard the name of the maid, my crowding tears de

scended. I blessed the lovely beam of youth, and bade the battle move.

Why, son of the rock, should Ossian tell how Teutha's warriors died? They are now forgot in their land; and their tombs are not found on the heath. Years came on with their tempests: and the green mounds moulder-ed away. Scarce is the grave of Dunthalmo seen, or the place where he fell by the spear of Ossian. Some grey warrior, half blind with age, sitting by night at the flaming oak of the hall, tells now my actions to his sons, and the fall of the dark Dunthalmo. The face of youth bend sidelong towards his voice; surprise and joy burn in their eyes.

I found the sons[g] of Rathmor bound to an oak; my sword cut the thongs from his hands. And I gave him the white-bosomed Colmal. They dwelt in the halls of Teutha; and Ossian returned to Selma.

g Calthon.



LATHMON:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Lathmon, a British prince, taking advantage of Fingal's absence in Ireland, made a descent on Morven, and advanced within sight of Selma, the royal palace. Fingal arrived in the mean time, and Lathmon retreated to a hill, where his army was surprised by night, and himself taken prisoner by Ossian and Gaul the son of Morni. This exploit of Gaul and Ossian bears a near resemblance to the beautiful episode of Nisus and Eurjalus in Virgil's ninth Æneid. The poem opens with the first appearance of Fingal on the coast of Morven, and ends, it may be supposed, about noon the next day.

SELMA, thy halls are silent. There is no sound in the woods of Morven. The wave tumbles alone on the coast. The silent beam of the sun is on the field. The daughters of Morven come forth like the bow of the shower; they look towards green Ullin for the white sails of the king. He had promised to return, but the winds of the north arose.

Who pours from the eastern hill, like a stream of darkness? It is the host of Lathmon. He has heard of the absence of Fingal. He trusts in the winds of the north. His soul brightens with joy. Why dost thou come, Lathmon? the mighty are not in Selma. Why comest thou with thy forward spear? Will the daughters of Morven fight? But stop, O mighty stream, in thy course! Does not Lathmon behold these sails? Why dost thou vanish, Lathmon, like the mist of the lake? But the squally storm is behind thee; Fingal pursues thy step!

The king of Morven started from sleep, as we rolled on the dark-blue wave. He stretched his hand to his spear, and his heroes rose around. We knew that he had seen his fathers, for they often descended to his dreams, when the sword of the foe rose over the land; and the battle darkened before us. "Whither hast thou

fled, O wind?" said the king of Morven. "Dost thou rustle in the chambers of the south, and pursue the shower in other lands? Why dost thou not come to my sails? to the blue face of my seas? The foe is in the land of Morven, and the king is absent. But let each bind on his mail, and each assume his shield. Stretch every spear over the wave; let every sword be unsheathed. Lathmon[a] is before us with his host; he that fled[b] from Fingal on the plains of Lona. But he returns, like a collected stream, and his roar is between our hills."

Such were the words of Fingal. We rushed into Carmona's bay. Ossian ascended the hill; and thrice struck his bossy shield. The rock of Morven replied; and the bounding roes came forth. The foes were troubled in my presence: and collected their darkened host; for I stood, like a cloud on the hill, rejoicing in the arms of my youth.

Morni[c] sat beneath a tree, at the roaring waters of Strumon[d]: his locks of age are grey: he leans forward on his staff; young Gaul is near the hero, hearing the battles of his youth. Often did he rise, in the fire of his soul, at the mighty deeds of Morni The aged heard the sound of Ossian's shield: he knew the sign of battle. He started at once from his place. His grey hair parted on his back. He remembers the actions of other years.

My son," he said to fair-haired Gaul. "I hear the sound of battle. The king of Morven is returned, the sign of war is heard. Go to the halls of Strumon, and bring his arms to Morni. Bring the arms which my father wore in his age, for my arm begins to fail. Take thou thy armour, O Gaul: and rush to the first of thy

a It is said, by tradition, that it was the intelligence of Lathmon's invasion, that occasioned Fingal's return from Ireland; though Ossian, more poetically, ascribes the cause of Fingal's knowledge to his dream.

b He alludes to a battle wherein Fingal had defeated Lathmon. The occasion of this first war, between those heroes, is told by Ossian in another poem, which the translator has seen.

c Morni was chief of a numerous tribe, in the days of Fingal and his father Comhal. The last mentioned hero was killed in battle against Morni's tribe; but the valour and conduct of Fingal reduced them, at last, to obedience. We find the two heroes perfectly reconciled in this poem.

d Sru' mone, 'stream of the hill.' Here the proper name of a rivulet in the neighbourhood of Selma.

battles. Let thine arm reach to the renown of thy fathers. Be thy course in the field, like the eagle's wing. Why shouldst thou fear death, my son? the valiant fall with fame; their shields turn the black stream of danger away, and renown dwells on their grey hairs. Dost thou not see, O Gaul, how the steps of my age are honoured? Morni moves forth, and the young meet him with reverence, and turn their eyes with silent joy on his course. But I never fled from danger, my son! my sword lightened through the darkness of battle. The stranger melted before me; the mighty were blasted in my presence."

Gaul brought the arms to Morni: the aged warrior covered himself with steel. He took the spear in his hand, which was often stained with the blood of the valiant. He came towards Fingal, his son attended his steps. The son of Comhal rejoiced over the warrior, when he came in the locks of his age.

"King of the roaring Strumon!" said the rising joy of Fingal; "do I behold thee in arms, after thy strength has failed? Often has Morni shone in battles, like the beam of the rising sun; when he disperses the storms of the hill, and brings peace to the glittering fields. But why didst thou not rest in thine age? Thy renown is in the song. The people behold thee, and bless the departure of mighty Morni. Why didst thou not rest in thine age? For the foe will vanish before Fingal."

"Son of Comhal," replied the chief, "the strength of Morni's arm has failed. I attempt to draw the sword of my youth, but it remains in its place. I throw the spear, but it falls short of the mark; and I feel the weight of my shield. We decay like the grass of the mountain, and our strength returns no more. I have a son, O Fingal, his soul has delighted in the actions of Morni's youth; but his sword has not been lifted against the foe, neither has his fame begun. I come with him to battle to direct his arm. His renown will be a sun to my soul, in the dark hour of my departure. O that the name of Morni were forgot among the peo-

ple! that the heroes would only say, Behold the father of Gaul."

"King of Strumon," Fingal replied, "Gaul shall lift the sword in battle. But he shall lift it before Fingal; my arm shall defend his youth. But rest thou in the halls of Selma; and hear of our renown. Bid the harp be strung, and the voice of the bards arise, that those who fall may rejoice in their fame; and the soul of Morni brighten with gladness. Ossian! thou hast fought in battles: the blood of strangers is on thy spear: let thy course be with Gaul in the strife; but depart not from the side of Fingal; lest the foe find you alone; and your fame fail at once."

I saw[e] Gaul in his arms, and my soul was mixed with his: for the fire of the battle was in his eyes! he looked to the foe with joy. We spoke the words of friendship in secret; and the lightning of our swords poured together; for we drew them behind the wood, and tried the strength of our arms on the empty air.

Night came down on Morven. Fingal sat at the beam of the oak. Morni sat by his side with all his grey waving locks. Their discourse is of other times, and the actions of their fathers. Three bards, at times, touched the harp; and Ullin was near with his song. He sung of the mighty Comhal; but darkness gathered[f] on Morni's brow. He rolled his red eye on Ullin; and the song of the bard ceased. Fingal observed the aged hero, and he mildly spoke.

"Chief of Strumon, why that darkness? Let the days of other years be forgot. Our fathers contended in battle, but we meet together at the feast. Our swords are turned on the foes, and they melt before us on the field. Let the days of our fathers be forgot, king of mossy Strumon."

[e] Ossian speaks. The contrast between the old and young heroes is strongly marked. The circumstance of the latter drawing their swords is well imagined, and agrees with the impatience of young soldiers just entered upon action.

[f] Ullin had chosen ill the subject of his song. The "darkness which gathered on Morni's brow," did not proceed from any dislike he had to Comhal's name, though they were foes, but from his fear that the song would awaken Fingal to remembrance of the feuds which had subsisted of old between their families. Fingal's speech on this occasion abounds with generosity and good sense.

"King of Morven," replied the chief, "I remember thy father with joy. He was terrible in battle; the rage of the chief was deadly. My eyes were full of tears, when the king of heroes fell. The valiant fall, O Fingal, and the feeble remains on the hills. How many heroes have passed away, in the days of Morni! And I did not shun the battle; neither did I fly from the strife of the valiant. Now let the friends of Fingal rest; for the night is around; that they may rise, with strength, to battle against car-borne Lathmon. I hear the sound of his host, like thunder heard on a distant heath. Ossian! and fair-haired Gaul! ye are swift in the race. Observe the foes of Fingal from that woody hill. But approach them not; your fathers are not near to shield you. Let not your fame fall at once. The valour of youth may fail."

We heard the words of the chief with joy, and moved in the clang of our arms. Our steps are in the woody hill. Heaven burns with all its stars. The meteors of death fly over the field. The distant noise of the foe reached our ears. It was then Gaul spoke, in his valour; his hand half-unsheathed the sword.

"Son of Fingal," he said, "why burns the soul of Gaul? my heart beats high. My steps are disordered; and my hand trembles on my sword. When I look towards the foe, my soul lightens before me, and I see their sleeping host. Tremble thus the souls of the valiant in battles of the spear? How would the soul of Morni rise if we should rush on the foe! Our renown would grow in the song; and our steps be stately in the eyes of the brave."

"Son of Morni," I replied, "my soul delights in battle. I delight to shine in battle alone, and to give my name to the bards. But what if the foe shall prevail; shall I behold the eyes of the king? They are terrible in his displeasure, and like the flames of death. But I will not behold them in his wrath. Ossian shall prevail or fall. But shall the fame of the vanquished rise? They pass away like a shadow. But the fame of Ossian shall rise. His deeds shall be like his fathers.

Let us rush in our arms, son of Morni; let us rush to battle. Gaul! if thou shalt return, go to Selma's lofty wall. Tell to Everallin that I fell with fame; carry this sword to Branno's daughter. Let her give it to Oscar, when the years of his youth shall arise."

"Son of Fingal," Gaul replied with a sigh; "shall I return after Ossian is low! What would my father say, and Fingal, king of men? The feeble would turn their eyes and say, Behold the mighty Gaul who left his friend in his blood! Ye shall not behold me, ye feeble, but in the midst of my renown. Ossian! I have heard from my father the mighty deeds of heroes; their mighty deeds when alone; for the soul increases in danger."

"Son of Morni," I replied, and strode before him on the heath; "our fathers shall praise our valour, when they mourn our fall. A beam of gladness shall rise on their souls, when their eyes are full of tears. They will say, Our sons have not fallen like the grass of the field, for they spread death around them. But why should we think of the narrow house? The sword defends the valiant. But death pursues the flight of the feeble; and their renown is not heard."

We rushed forward through night; and came to the roar of a stream which bent its blue course round the foe, through trees that echoed to its noise; we came to the bank of the stream, and saw the sleeping host. Their fires were decayed on the plain: and the lonely steps of their scouts were distant far. I stretched my spear before me to support my steps over the streams. But Gaul took my hand, and spoke the words of the valiant.

"Shall the son of Fingal rush on a sleeping foe? Shall he come like a blast by night, when it overturns the young trees in secret? Fingal did not thus receive his fame, nor dwells renown on the grey hairs of Morni, for actions like these. Strike, Ossian, strike the shield of battle, and let their thousands rise. Let them meet Gaul in his first battle, that he may try the strength of his arm."

My soul rejoiced over the warrior, and my bursting tears descended. "And the foe shall meet Gaul," I said: "the fame of Morni's son shall arise. But rush not too far, my hero: let the gleam of thy steel be near to Ossian. Let our hands join in slaughter. Gaul! dost thou not behold that rock? Its grey side dimly gleams to the stars. If the foe shall prevail, let our back be towards the rock. Then shall they fear to approach our spears: for death is in our hands."

I struck thrice my echoing shield. The starting foe arose. We rushed on in the sound of our arms. Their crowded steps fly over the heath; for they thought that the mighty Fingal came; and the strength of their arms withered away. The sound of their flight was like that of flame, when it rushes through the blasted groves. It was then the spear of Gaul flew in its strength: it was then the sword arose. Cremor fell, and mighty Leth. Dunthormo struggled in his blood. The steel rushed through Crotha's side, as bent, he rose on his spear; the black stream poured from the wound, and hissed on the half-extinguished oak. Cathmin saw the steps of the hero behind him, and ascended a blasted tree; but the spear pierced him from behind. Shrieking, panting, he fell; moss and withered branches pursue his fall, and strew the blue arms of Gaul.

Such were thy deeds, son of Morni, in the first of thy battles. Nor slept thy sword by thy side, thou last of Fingal's race! Ossian rushed forward in his strength, and the people fell before him; as the grass by the staff of the boy, when he whistles along the field, and the grey beard of the thistle falls. But careless the youth moves on; his steps are towards the desart.

Grey morning rose around us; the winding streams are bright along the heath. The foe gathered on a hill, and the rage of Lathmon rose. He bent the red eye of his wrath: he is silent in his rising grief. He often struck his bossy shield; and his steps are unequal on the heath. I saw the distant darkness of the hero, and I spoke to Morni's son.

"Car-borne[g] chief of Strumon, dost thou behold the foe? They gather on the hill in their wrath, let our steps be towards the king[h]. He shall arise in his strength, and the host of Lathmon vanish. Our fame is around us, warrior, the eyes of the aged[i] will rejoice. But let us fly, son of Morni, Lathmon descends the hill." "Then let our steps be slow," replied the fair-haired Gaul; "lest the foe say with a smile, Behold the warriors of night, they are like ghosts, terrible in darkness, but they melt away before the beam of the east. Ossian, take the shield of Gormar who fell beneath thy spear, that the aged heroes may rejoice, when they shall behold the actions of their sons."

Such were our words on the plain, when Sulmath[k] came to car-borne Lathmon: Sulmath, chief of Dutha, at the dark-rolling stream of Duvranna[l]. "Why dost thou not rush, son of Nuath, with a thousand of thy heroes? Why dost thou not descend with thy host before the warriors fly? Their blue arms are beaming to the rising light, and their steps are before us on the heath."

"Son of the feeble hand," said Lathmon, "shall my host descend? They are but two, son of Dutha, and shall a thousand lift their steel? Nuath would mourn, in his hall, for the departure of his fame. His eyes would turn from Lathmon, when the tread of his feet approached. Go thou to the heroes, chief of Dutha, for I behold the stately steps of Ossian. His fame is worthy of my steel; let him fight with Lathmon."

The noble Sulmath came. I rejoiced in the words of the king. I raised the shield on my arm; and Gaul placed in my hand the sword of Morni. We returned to the murmuring stream; Lathmon came in his strength. His dark host rolled, like the clouds, behind him: but the son of Nuath was bright in his steel.

g Car-borne is a title of honour bestowed by Ossian, indiscriminately, on every hero; as every chief, in his time, kept a chariot or litter by way of state.

h Fingal.

i Fingal and Morni.

k Suil-mhath, 'a man of good eye-sight.'

l Dubh-bhranna, 'dark mountain-stream.' What river went by this name, in the days of Ossian, is not easily ascertained, at this distance of time. A river in Scotland, which falls into the sea at Banff, still retains the name of Duvran. If that is meant by Ossian in this passage, Lathmon must have been a prince of the Pictish nation, or those Caledonians who inhabited of old the eastern coast of Scotland.

"Son of Fingal," said the hero, "thy fame has grown on our fall. How many lie there of my people by thy hand, thou king of men! Lift now thy spear against Lathmon; and lay the son of Nuath low. Lay him low amongst his people, or thou thyself must fall. It shall never be told in my halls that my warriors fell in my presence; that they fell in the presence of Lathmon, when his sword rested by his side: the blue eyes of Cutha[m] would roll in tears, and her steps be lonely in the vales of Dunlathmon."

"Neither shall it be told," I replied, "that the son of Fingal fled. Were his steps covered with darkness, yet would not Ossian fly; his soul would meet him and say, Does the bard of Selma fear the foe? No: he does not fear the foe. His joy is in the midst of battle."

Lathmon came on with his spear, and pierced the shield of Ossian. I felt the cold steel at my side; and drew the sword of Morni: I cut the spear in twain; the bright point fell glittering to the ground. The son of Nuath burned in his wrath, and lifted high his sounding shield. His dark eyes rolled above it, as bending forward, it shone like a gate of brass. But Ossian's spear pierced the brightness of its bosses, and sunk in a tree that rose behind. The shield hung on the quivering lance! but Lathmon still advanced. Gaul foresaw the fall of the chief, and stretched his buckler before my sword; when it descended, in a stream of light, over the king of Dunlathmon.

Lathmon beheld the son of Morni, and the tear started from his eye. He threw the sword of his fathers on the ground, and spoke the words of the valiant. "Why should Lathmon fight against the first of mortal men? Your souls are beams from heaven; your swords the flames of death. Who can equal the renown of the heroes, whose actions are so great in youth? O that ye were in the halls of Nuath, in the green dwelling of Lathmon! then would my father say, that his son did not yield to the feeble. But who comes, a mighty stream, along the echoing heath? the little hills are

m Cutha appears to have been Lathmon's wife or mistress.

troubled before him, and a thousand spirits are on the beams of his steel; the spirits[n] of those who are to fall by the arm of the king of resounding Morven. Happy art thou, O Fingal, thy sons shall fight thy battles; they go forth before thee: and they return with the steps of their renown."

Fingal came, in his mildness, rejoicing in secret over the actions of his son. Morni's face brightened with gladness, and his aged eyes looked faintly through the tears of joy. We came to the halls of Selma, and sat round the feast of shells. The maids of the song came into our presence, and the mildly-blushing Everallin. Her dark hair spread on her neck of snow, her eyes rolled in secret on Ossian; she touched the harp of music, and we blessed the daughter of Branno.

Fingal rose in his place, and spoke to Dunlathmon's battling king. The sword of Trenmor trembled by his side, as he lifted up his mighty arm. "Son of Nuath," he said, "why dost thou search for fame in Morven? We are not of the race of the feeble; nor do our swords gleam over the weak. When did we come to Dunlathmon, with the sound of war? Fingal does not delight in battle, though his arm is strong. My renown grows on the fall of the haughty. The lightning of my steel pours on the proud in arms. The battle comes: and the tombs of the valiant rise; the tombs of my people rise, O my fathers! and I at last must remain alone. But I will remain renowned, and the departure of my soul shall be one stream of light. Lathmon! retire to thy place. Turn thy battles to other lands. The race of Morven are renowned, and their foes are the sons of the unhappy."

n It was thought, in Ossian's time, that each person had his attending spirit. The traditions concerning this opinion are dark and unsatisfactory.

OITHONA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Gaul, the son of Morni, attended Lathmon into his own country, after his being defeated in Morven, as related in the preceding poem. He was kindly entertained by Nuath the father of Lathmon, and fell in love with his daughter Oithona. The lady was no less enamoured of Gaul, and a day was fixed for their marriage. In the mean time Fingal, preparing for an expedition into the country of the Britons, sent for Gaul. He obeyed, and went; but not without promising to Oithona to return, if he survived the war, by a certain day. Lathmon too was obliged to attend his father Nuath in his wars, and Oithona was left alone at Dunlathmon, the seat of the family. Dunrommath, lord of Uthal, supposed to be one of the Orkneys, taking advantage of the absence of her friends, came and carried off, by force, Oithona, who had formerly rejected his love, into Tromathon, a desart island, where he concealed her in a cave.

Gaul returned on the day appointed; heard of the rape, and sailed to Tromathon, to revenge himself on Dunrommath. When he landed, he found Oithona disconsolate and resolved not to survive the loss of her honour. She told him the story of her misfortunes, and she scarce ended, when Dunrommath with his followers, appeared at the furthest end of the island. Gaul prepared to attack him, recommending to Oithona to retire till the battle was over. She seemingly obeyed: but she secretly armed herself, rushed into the thickest of the battle, and was mortally wounded. Gaul pursuing the flying enemy, found her just expiring on the field; he mourned over her, raised her tomb, and returned to Morven. Thus is the story handed down by tradition; nor is it given with any material difference in the poem, which opens with Gaul's return to Dunlathmon, after the rape of Oithona.

DARKNESS dwells around Dunlathmon, though the moon shows half her face on the hill. The daughter of night turns her eyes away; for she beholds the grief that is coming. The son of Morni is on the plain, but there is no sound in the hall. No long streaming beam of light comes trembling through the gloom. The voice of Oithona *a* is not heard amidst the noise of the streams of Duvranna. "Whither art thou gone in thy beauty, dark-haired daughter of Nuath? Lathmon is in the field of the valiant, but thou didst promise to remain in the hall till the son of Morni returned; till he returned from Strumon, to the maid of his love. The tear was on thy cheek at his depar-

a Oi-thona, 'the virgin of the wave.'

ture: the sigh rose in secret in thy breast. But thou dost not come to meet him with songs, with the lightly-trembling sound of the harp."

Such were the words of Gaul, when he came to Dunlathmon's towers. The gates were open and dark. The winds were blustering in the hall. The trees strewed the threshold with leaves; and the murmur of night was abroad. Sad, and silent at a rock, the son of Morni sat: his soul trembled for the maid; but he knew not whither to turn his course. The son[b] of Leth stood at a distance, and heard the winds in his bushy hair. But he did not raise his voice, for he saw the sorrow of Gaul.

Sleep descended on the heroes. The visions of night arose. Oithona stood in a dream, before the eyes of Morni's son. Her dark hair was loose and disordered: her lovely eyes rolled in tears. Blood stained her snowy arm. The robe half hid the wound of her breast. She stood over the chief, and her voice was heard.

"Sleeps the son of Morni, he that was lovely in the eyes of Oithona. Sleeps Gaul at the distant rock, and the daughter of Nuath low? The sea rolls round the dark isle of Tromathon; I sit in my tears in the cave. Nor do I sit alone, O Gaul, the dark chief of Cluthal is there. He is there in the rage of his love. And what can Oithona do?"

A rougher blast rushed through the oak. The dream of night departed. Gaul took his aspen spear; he stood in the rage of wrath. Often did his eyes turn to the east, and accuse the lagging light. At length the morning came forth. The hero lifted up the sail. The winds came rustling from the hill; and he bounded on the waves of the deep. On the third day arose Tromathon[c], like a blue shield in the midst of the sea. The white wave roared against its rocks; sad Oithona sat on the coast. She looked on the rolling waters,

[b] Morlo, the son of Leth, is one of Fingal's most famous heroes. He and three other [illegible] attended Gaul on his expedition to Tromathon.

[c] From-Thon, 'heavy or deep sounding wave.'

and her tears descend. But when she saw Gaul in his arms, she started and turned her eyes away. Her lovely cheek is bent and red; her white arm trembles by her side. Thrice she strove to fly from his presence; but her steps failed her as she went.

"Daughter of Nuath," said the hero, "why dost thou fly from Gaul? Do my eyes send forth the flame of death? or darkens hatred in my soul? Thou art to me the beam of the east, rising in a land unknown. But thou coverest thy face with sadness, daughter of high Dunlathmon! Is the foe of Oithona near? My soul burns to meet him in battle. The sword trembles on the side of Gaul, and longs to glitter in his hand. Speak, daughter of Nuath, dost thou not behold my tears."

"Car-borne chief of Strumon," replied the sighing maid, "why comest thou over the dark-blue wave to Nuath's mournful daughter? Why did I not pass away in secret, like the flower of the rock, that lifts its fair head unseen, and strews its withered leaves on the blast? Why didst thou come, O Gaul, to hear my departing sigh? I pass away in my youth; and my name shall not be heard. Or it will be heard with sorrow, and the tears of Nuath will fall. Thou wilt be sad, son of Morni, for the fallen fame of Oithona. But she shall sleep in the narrow tomb, far from the voice of the mourner. Why didst thou come, chief of Strumon, to the sea-beat rocks of Tromathon?"

"I came to meet my foes, daughter of car-borne Nuath! the death of Cuthal's chief darkens before me; or Morni's son shall fall. Oithona! when Gaul is low, raise my tomb on the oozy rock; and when the dark-bounding ship shall pass, call the sons of the sea; call them, and give this sword, that they may carry it to Morni's hall; that the grey-haired hero may cease to look towards the desart for the return of his son."

"And shall the daughter of Nuath?" she replied with a bursting sigh; "Shall I live in Tromathon, and the son of Morni low? My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea, which lifts its blue

waves to every wind, and rolls beneath the storm. The blast which shall lay thee low, shall spread the branches of Oithona on earth. We shall wither together, son of car borne Morni? The narrow house is pleasant to me, and the grey stone of the dead: for never more will I leave thy rocks, sea-surrounding Tromathon! night[d] came on with her clouds, after the departure of Lathmon, when he went to the wars of his fathers, to the moss-covered rock of Duthormoth; night came on, and I sat in the hall, at the beam of the oak. The wind was abroad in the trees. I heard the sound of arms. Joy rose in my face; for I thought of thy return. It was the chief of Cuthal, the red-haired strength of Dunrommath. His eyes rolled in fire: the blood of my people was on his sword. They who defended Oithona fell by the gloomy chief. What could I do? My arm was weak; it could not lift the spear. He took me in my grief, amidst my tears he raised the sail. He feared the returning strength of Lathmon, the brother of unhappy Oithona. But behold, he comes with his people! the dark wave is divided before him! Whither wilt thou turn thy steps, son of Morni? Many are the warriors of Dunrommath!"

"My steps never turned from battle," replied the hero as he unsheathed his sword; "and shall I begin to fear, Oithona, when thy foes are near? Go to thy cave, daughter of Nuath, till our battle cease. Son of Leth, bring the bows of our fathers; and the sounding quiver of Morni. Let our three warriors bend the yew. Ourselves will lift the spear. They are an host on the rock; but our souls are strong."

The daughter of Nuath went to the cave: a troubled joy rose on her mind, like the red path of the lightning on a stormy cloud. Her soul was resolved, and the tears was dried from her wildly-looking eye. Dunrommath slowly approached; for he saw the son of Morni. Contempt contracted his face, a smile is on his dark-brown cheek; his red eye rolled, half-concealed, beneath his shaggy brows.

[d] Oithona relates how she was carried away by Dunrommath.

" Whence are the sons of the sea?" begun the gloomy chief. " Have the winds driven you to the rocks of Tromathon? Or come you in search of the white-handed daughter of Nuath? The sons of the unhappy, ye feeble men, come to the hand of Dunrommath. His eye spares not the weak, and he delights in the blood of strangers. Oithona is a beam of light, and the chief of Cuthal enjoys it in secret: would thou come on its loveliness, like a cloud, son of the feeble hand? Thou mayest come, but shalt thou return to the halls of thy fathers?"

" Dost thou not know me," said Gaul, " red-haired chief of Cluthal! Thy feet were swift on the heath, in the battle of car-borne Lathmon: when the sword of Morni's son pursued his host in Morven's woody land. Dunrommath! thy words are mighty, for thy warriors gather behind thee. But do I fear them, son of pride? I am not of the race of the feeble."

Gaul advanced in his arms; Dunrommath shrunk behind his people. But the spear of Gaul pierced the gloomy chief, and his sword looped off his head, as it bended in death. The son of Morni shook it thrice by the lock; the warriors of Dunrommath fled. The arrows of Morven pursued them: ten fell on the mossy rocks. The rest lift the sounding sail, and bound on the echoing deep. Gaul advanced towards the cave of Oithona. He beheld a youth leaning against a rock. An arrow had pierced his side; and his eye rolled faintly beneath his helmet. The soul of Morni's son is sad; he came, and spoke the words of peace.

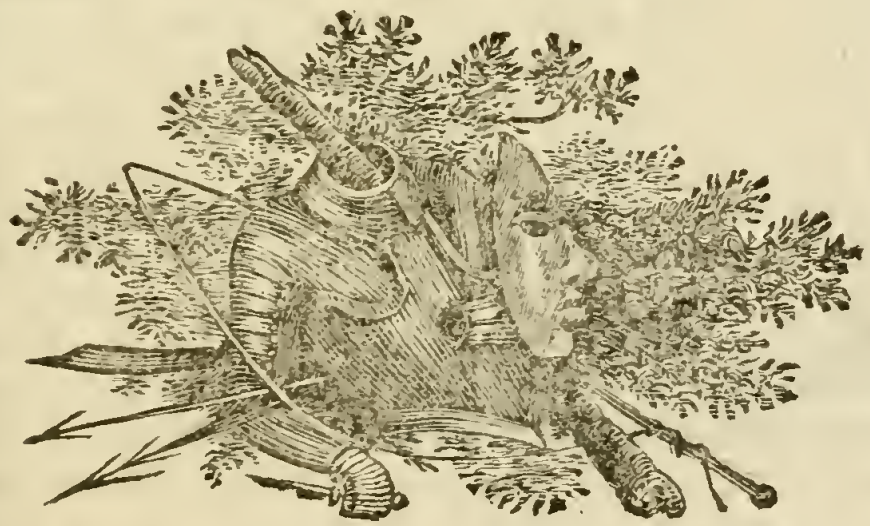
" Can the hand of Gaul heal thee, youth of the mournful brow? I have searched for the herbs of the mountains; I have gathered them on the secret banks of their streams. My hand has closed the wound of the valiant, and their eyes have blessed the son of Morni. Where dwelt thy fathers, warrior? Were they of the sons of the mighty? Sadness shall come, like night on thy native streams; for thou art fallen in thy youth."

" My fathers," replied the stranger, " were of the race of the mighty; but they shall not be sad; for my

fame is departed like morning mist. High walls rise on the banks of Duvranna: and see their mossy towers in the stream; a rock ascends behind them with its bending firs. Thou mayest behold it far distant. There my brother dwells. He is renowned in battle: give him this glittering helmet."

The helmet fell from the hand of Gaul; for it was the wounded Oithona. She had armed herself in the cave, and came in search of death. Her heavy eyes are half-closed; the blood pours from her side, "Son of Morni," she said, "prepare the narrow tomb. Sleep comes, like a cloud, on my soul. The eyes of Oithona are dim. O had I dwelt at Duvranna in the bright beam of my fame, then had my years come on with joy; and the virgins would bless my steps. But I fall in youth, son of Morni, and my father shall blush in his hall."

She fell pale on the rock of Tromathon. The mournful hero raised her tomb. He came to Morven; but we saw the darkness of his soul. Ossian took the harp in the praise of Oithona. The brightness of the face of Gaul returned. But his sigh rose, at times, in the midst of his friends, like blasts that shake their unfrequent wings, after the stormy winds are laid.



CROMA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Malvina the daughter of Toscar is overheard by Ossian lamenting the death of Oscar her lover. Ossian, to divert her grief, relates his own actions in an expedition which he undertook, at Fingal's command, to aid Crothar the petty king of Croma, a country in Ireland, against Rothmar who invaded his dominions. The story is delivered down thus, in tradition. Crothar, king of Croma, being blind with age, and his son too young for the field, Rothmar the chief of Tromlo, resolved to avail himself of the opportunity offered of annexing the dominions of Crothar to his own. He accordingly marched into the country subject to Crothar, but which he held of Arth, or Artho, who was, at the time, supreme king of Ireland.

Crothar, being, on account of his age and blindness, unfit for action, sent for aid to Fingal, king of Scotland; who ordered his son Ossian to the relief of Crothar. But before his arrival, Fovar-gormo, the son of Crothar, attacking Rothmar, was slain himself, and his forces totally defeated. Ossian renewed the war; came to battle, killed Rothmar, and routed his army. Croma being thus delivered of its enemies, Ossian returned to Scotland.

"It was the voice of my love! few are his visits to the dreams of Malvina! Open your airy halls, ye fathers of mighty Toscar. Unfold the gates of your clouds; the steps of Malvina's departure are near. I have heard a voice in my dream. I feel the fluttering of my soul. Why didst thou come, O blast, from the dark-rolling of the lake? Thy rustling wing was in the trees, the dream of Malvina departed. But she beheld her love, when his robe of mist flew on the wind; the beam of the sun was on his skirts, they glittered like the gold of the stranger. It was the voice of my love! few are his visits to my dreams!

"But thou dwellest in the soul of Malvina, son of mighty Ossian. My sighs arise with the beam of the east; my tears descend with the drops of night. I was a lovely tree, in thy presence, Oscar, with all my branches round me; but thy death came like a blast from the desart, and laid my green head low; the spring returned with its showers, but no leaf of mine

arose. The virgins saw me silent in the hall, and they touched the harp of joy. The tear was on the cheek of Malvina. The virgins beheld me in my grief. Why art thou sad, they said; thou first of the maids of Lutha? Was he lovely as the beam of the morning, and stately in thy sight?"

Pleasant is thy song in Ossian's ear, daughter of streamy Lutha! Thou hast heard the music of departed bards in the dream of thy rest, when sleep fell on thine eyes, at the murmur of Moruth [a]. When thou didst return from the chase, in the day of the sun, thou hast heard the music of the bards, and thy song is lovely. It is lovely, O Malvina, but it melts the soul. There is a joy in grief when peace dwells in the breast of the sad. But sorrow wastes the mournful, O daughter of Toscar, and their days are few. They fall away, like the flower on which the sun looks in his strength after the mildew has passed over it, and its head is heavy with the drops of night. Attend to the tale of Ossian, O maid; he remembers the day of his youth.

The king commanded; I raised my sails, and rushed into the bay of Croma: into Croma's sounding bay in lovely Inisfail [b]. High on the coast arose the towers of Crothar, king of spears; Crothar renowned in the battles of his youth, but age dwelt then around the chief. Rothmar raised the sword against the hero; and the wrath of Fingal burned. He sent Ossian to meet Rothmar in battle, for the chief of Croma was the companion of his youth. I sent the bard before me with songs; I came into the hall of Crothar. There sat the hero amidst the arms of his fathers, but his eyes had failed. His grey locks waved around a staff, on which the warrior leaned. He hummed the song of other times, when the sound of our arms reached his ears. Crothar rose, stretched his aged hand, and blessed the son of Fingal.

a Mor'-ruth, 'great stream.'

b Inisfail, one of the ancient names of Ireland.

"Ossian," said the hero, "the strength of Crothar's arm has failed. O could I lift the sword as on the day that Fingal fought at Strutha! He was the first of mortal men; but Crothar had also his fame. The king of Morven praised me, and he placed on my arm the bossy shield of Calthar, whom the hero had slain in war. Dost thou not behold it on the wall, for Crothar's eyes have failed? Is thy strength like thy father's, Ossian? let the aged feel thine arm."

I gave my arm to the king; he feels it with his aged hands. The sigh rose in his breast, and his tears descended. "Thou art strong, my son," he said, "but not like the king of Morven. But who is like that hero among the mighty in war? Let the feast of my halls be spread; and let my bards raise the song. Great is he that is within my walls, sons of echoing Croma!" The feast is spread. The harp is heard; and joy is in the hall. But it was joy covering a sigh, that darkly dwelt in every breast. It was like the faint beam of the moon, spread on a cloud in heaven. At length the music ceased, and the aged king of Croma spoke; he spoke without a tear, but the sigh swelled in the midst of his voice.

"Son of Fingal! dost thou not behold the darkness of Crothar's hall of shells? My soul was not dark at the feast, when my people lived. I rejoiced in the presence of strangers, when my son shone in the hall. But, Ossian, he is a beam that is departed, and left no streak of light behind. He is fallen, son of Fingal, in the battles of his father. Rothmar, the chief of grassy Tromla, heard that my eyes had failed: he heard that my arms were fixed in the hall, and the pride of his soul arose. He came towards Croma; my people fell before him. I took my arms in the hall; but what could sightless Crothar do? My steps were unequal; my grief was great. I wished for the days that were past. Days! wherein I fought and conquered in the field of blood. My son returned from the chase; the fair-haired Fovar-gormo[c]. He had not lifted his sword

c Faohbar-gorm, 'the blue point of steel.'

in battle, for his arm was young. But the soul of the youth was great; the fire of valour burned in his eyes. He saw the disordered steps of his father, and his sigh arose. "King of Croma," he said, "is it because thou hast no son? is it for the weakness of Fovar-gormo's arm that thy sighs arise? I begin, my father, to feel the strength of my arm; I have drawn the sword of my youth; and I have bent the bow. Let me meet this Rothmar, with the youths of Croma: let me meet him, O my father; for I feel my burning soul."

"And thou shalt meet him," I said, "son of the sightless Crothar: But let others advance before thee, that I may hear the tread of thy feet at thy return; for my eyes behold thee not, fair-haired Favor-gormo! He went; he met the foe; he fell. The foe advances towards Croma. He who slew my son is near with all his pointed spears."

It is not time to fill the shell, I replied, and took my spear. My people saw the fire of my eyes; and they rose around. All night we strode along the heath. Grey morning rose in the east. A green narrow vale appeared before us; nor did it want its blue stream. The dark host of Rothmar are on its banks, with all their glittering arms. We fought along the vale; they fled; Rothmar sunk beneath my sword. Day had not descended in the west when I brought his arms to Crothar. The aged hero felt them with his hands; and joy brightened in his soul.

The people gather to the hall; the sound of the shells is heard. Ten harps are strung; five bards advance, and sing by turns [d] the praise of Ossian; they poured

[d] Those extempore compositions were in great repute among succeeding bards. The pieces extant of that kind show more of the good ear, than of the poetical genius of their authors. The translator has only met with one poem of this sort, which he thinks worthy of being preserved. It is a thousand years later than Ossian, but the authors seem to have observed his manner, and adopted some of his expressions. The story of it is this: Five bards passing the night in the house of a chief, who was a poet himself, went severally to make their observations on, and returned with an extempore description of night. The night happened to be one in October, as appears from the poem; and in the north of Scotland. It has all that variety which the bards ascribe to it in their descriptions.

FIRST BARD.

NIGHT is dull and dark. The clouds rest on the hills. No star with green trembling beam: no moon looks from the sky. I hear the blast in the wood; but I hear it distant far. The stream of the valley murmurs; but its murmur is sullen and sad. From the tree at the grave of the dead, the long-howling owl is heard. I see a dim form on

forth their burning souls, and the harp answered to their voice. The joy of Croma was great! for peace returned to the land. The night came on with silence, and the morning returned with joy. No foe came in darkness, with his glittering spear. The joy of Croma was great; for the gloomy Rothmar fell.

the plain! It is a ghost! It fades—it flies. Some funeral shall pass this way: the meteor marks the path.

The distant dog is howling from the hut of the hill. The stag lies on the mountain moss: the hind is at his side. She hears the wind in his branchy horns. She starts, but lies again.

The roe is in the clift of the rock; the heath-cock's head is beneath his wing. No beast, no bird, is abroad, but the owl and the howling fox. She on a leafless tree: he in a cloud on the hill.

Dark, parting, trembling, sad, the traveller has lost his way. Through shrubs, through thorns, he goes along the gurgling rill. He fears the rock and the fen. He fears the ghost of night. The old tree groans to the blast; the falling branch resounds. The wind drives the withered burs, clung together, along the grass. It is the light tread of a ghost! he trembles amidst the night.

Dark, dusky, howling is night! cloudy, woody, and full of ghosts! The dead are abroad! My friends, receive me from the night.

SECOND BARD.

THE wind up. The shower decends. The spirit of the mountain shrieks. Woods fall from high. Windows flap. The growing river roars. The traveller attempts the ford. Hark, that shriek! he dies:—the storm drives the horse from the hill, the goat, the lowing cow. They tremble, as drives the shower beside the mouldering bank. The hunter starts from sleep in his lonely hut; he wakes the fire decayed. His wet dogs smoke around him. He fills the chinks with heath. Loud roar two mountain-streams which meet beside his booth.

Sad, on the side of a hill, the wandering shepherd sits. The tree resounds above him. The stream roars down the rock. He waits for the rising moon to guide him to his home.

Ghosts ride on the storm to-night. Sweet is their voice between the squalls of wind. Their songs are of other worlds.

The rain is past. The dry wind blows. Streams roar, and windows flap. Cold drops fall from the roof. I see the starry sky. But the shower gathers again. The west is gloomy and dark. Night is stormy and dismal: receive me, my friends, from night.

THIRD BARD.

THE wind still sounds between the hills; and whistles through the grass of the rock. The firs fall from their place. The turfy hut is torn. The clouds, divided, fly over the sky, and show the burning stars. The meteor, token of death! flies sparkling through the gloom. It rests on the hill, I see the withered fern, the dark-browed rock, the fallen oak. Who is that in his shroud beneath the tree, by the stream?

The waves dark-tumble on the lake, and lash its rocky sides. The boat is brim-full in the cave; the oars on the rocking tide. A maid sits sad beside the rock, and eyes the rolling stream. Her lover promised to come. She saw his boat, when yet it was light on the lake. Is this his broken boat on the shore? Are these his groans on the wind?

Hark! the hail rattles around. The flaky snow descends. The tops of the hills are white. The stormy winds abate. Various is the night and cold; receive me, my friends, from night.

FOURTH BARD.

NIGHT is calm and fair; blue, starry, settled is night. The winds, with the clouds are gone. They sink behind the hill. The moon is up on the mountain. Trees glitter: streams shine on the rock. Bright rolls the settled lake; bright the stream of the vale.

I see the trees overturned: the shocks of corn on the plain. The wakeful hind rebuilds the shocks, and whistles on the distant field.

Calm, settled, fair is night! Who comes from the place of the dead? That form in the robe of snow; white arms and dark-brown hair! It is the daughter of the chief of the people; she that lately fell! Come, let us view thee, O maid! thou that hast been the delight of heroes! The blast drives the phantom away; white, without form, it ascends the hill.

I raised my voice for Fovar-gormo, when they laid the chief in earth. The aged Crothar was there, but his sigh was not heard. He searched for the wound of his son, and found it in his breast. Joy rose in the face of the aged. He came and spoke to Ossian.

" King of spears!" he said, " my son has not fallen without his fame. The young warrior did not fly; but met death as he went forward in his strength. Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is heard! The feeble will not behold them in the hall; or smile at their trembling hands. Their memory shall be honoured in the song; the young tear of the virgin falls. But the aged wither away by degrees, and the fame of their youth begins to be forgot. They fall in secret; the sigh of their son is not heard. Joy is around their tomb; and the stone of their fame is placed without a tear. Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is around them!"

The breezes drive the blue mist, slowly, over the narrow vale. It rises on the hills and joins its head to heaven. Night is settled, calm, blue, starry, bright with the moon. Receive me not, my friends, for lovely is the night!

FIFTH BARD.

NIGHT is calm, but dreary. The moon is in a cloud in the west. Slow moves that pale beam along the shaded hill; the distant wave is heard. The torrent murmurs on the rock. The cock is heard from the booth. More than half the night is past. The house-wife groping in the gloom, re-kindles the settled fire. The hunter thinks that day approaches, and calls his bounding dogs. He ascends the hill, and whistles on his way. A blast removes the cloud. He sees the starry plough of the north. Much of the night is to pass; he nods by the mossy rock.

Hark! the whirlwind is in the wood! A low murmur in the vale! It is the mighty army of the dead returning from the air.

The moon rests behind the hill. The beam is still on that lofty rock. Long are the shadows of the trees. Now it is dark over all. Night is dreary, silent, and dark! receive me, my friends, from night.

THE CHIEF.

LET clouds rest on the hills: spirits fly, and travellers fear. Let the winds of the woods arise, the sounding storms descend. Roar streams, and windows flap, and green-winged meteors fly; rise the pale moon from behind her hills, or inclose her head in clouds; night is alike to me, blue, stormy, or gloomy the sky. Night flies before the beam, when it is poured on the hill. The young day returns from his clouds, but we return no more.

Where are our chiefs of old? Where our kings of mighty name? The fields of their battles are silent. Scarce their mossy tombs remain. We shall also be forgot. This lofty house shall fall. Our sons shall not behold the ruins in grass. They shall ask of the aged, Where stood the walls of our fathers?"

Raise the song, and strike the harp! send round the shells of joy. Suspend a hundred tapers on high. Youths and maids begin the dance Let some grey bard be near me, to tell the deeds of other times; of kings renowned in our land, of chiefs we behold no more. Thus let the night pass, until morning shall appear in our halls. Then let the bow be at hand, the dogs, the youths of the chase. Who shall ascend the hill with day, and awake the deer.

BERRATHON:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Fingal, in his voyage to Lochlin, whither he had been invited by Starno the father of Agandecca, touched at Berrathon, an island of Scandinavia, where he was kindly entertained by Larthmor the petty king of the place, who was a vassal of the supreme kings of Lochlin. The hospitality of Larthmor gained him Fingal's friendship, which that hero manifested after the imprisonment of Larthmor by his own son; by sending Ossian and Toscar, the father of Malvina, so often mentioned, to rescue Larthmor, and to punish the unnatural behaviour of Uthal. Uthal was handsome, and much admired by the ladies. Nina-thoma the beautiful daughter of Torthoma, a neighbouring prince, fell in love and fled with him. He proved inconstant; for another lady, whose name is not mentioned, gaining his affections, he confined Nina-thoma to a desart island near the coast of Berrathon. She was relieved by Ossian, who, in company with Toscar, landing on Berrathon, defeated the forces of Uthal, and killed him in a single combat. Nina-thoma, whose love not all the bad behaviour of Uthal could erase, hearing of his death, died of grief. In the mean time, Larthmor is restored, and Ossian and Toscar returned in triumph to Fingal. The present poem opens with an elegy on the death of Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, and closes with presages of the poet's death.

BEND thy blue course, O stream, round the narrow plain of Lutha[a]. Let the green woods hang over it from their mountains: and the sun look on it at noon. The thistle is there on its rock, and shakes its beard to the wind. The flower hangs its heavy head, waving, at times to the gale. "Why dost thou awake me, O gale?" it seems to say; "I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come, he that saw me in my beauty shall come: his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me! so shall they search in vain for the voice of Cona, after it has failed in the field. The hunter shall come forth in the morning, and the voice of my harp shall not be heard. "Where is the son of car-borne Fingal? The tear will be on his cheek. Then come thou, O Malvina[b], with all thy music, come; lay Os-

a Lutha, 'swift stream.'

b Mal-mhina, 'soft or lovely brow.' Mh in the Gaelic language has the same sound with V in English.

sian in the plain of Lutha: let his tomb rise in the lovely field.

Malvina! where art thou with thy songs, with the soft sound of thy step? Son[c] of Alpin art thou near? where is the daughter of Toscar? "I passed, O son of Fingal, by Tarlutha's mossy walls. The smoke of the hall was ceased: silence was among the trees of the hill. The voice of the chase was over. I saw the daughters of the bow. I asked about Malvina, but they answered not. They turned their faces away: thin darkness covered their beauty. They were like stars on a rainy hill, by night, each looking faintly through her mist."

Pleasant[d] be thy rest, O lovely beam! soon hast thou set on our hills! The steps of thy departure were stately, like the moon on the blue-trembling wave. But thou hast left us in darkness, first of the maids of Lutha! We sit at the rock, and there is no voice; no light but the meteor of fire! Soon hast thou set, Malvina, daughter of generous Toscar! But thou risest like the beam of the east, among the spirits of thy friends, where they sit in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder. A cloud hovers over Cona: its blue-curling sides are high. The winds are beneath it, with their wings; within it is the dwelling of[e] Fingal. There the hero sits in darkness; his airy spear is in his hand. His shield, half-covered with clouds, is like the darkened moon, when one half still remains in the wave, and the other looks sickly on the field.

His friends sit around the king, on mist; and hear the songs of Ullin: he strikes the half viewless harp; and raises the feeble voice. The lesser heroes, with a thousand meteors, light the airy hall. Malvina rises in the midst; a blush is on her cheek. She beholds

c Tradition has not handed down the name of this son of Alpin. His father was one of Fingal's principal bards, and he appears himself to have had a poetical genius.

d Ossian speaks. He calls Malvina a beam of light, and continues the metaphor throughout the paragraph.

The description of this ideal palace of Fingal is very poetical, and agreeable to the notions of those times, concerning the state of the deceased, who were supposed to pursue, after death, the pleasures and employments of their former life. The situation of Ossian's heroes, in their separate state, if not entirely happy, is more agreeable than the notions of the ancient Greeks concerning their departed heroes. See Hom. Odys. l. 11.

the unknown faces of her fathers, and turns aside her humid eyes. " Art thou come so soon," said Fingal, " daughter of generous Toscar? Sadness dwells in the halls of Lutha. My aged[f] son is sad. I hear the breeze of Cona, that was wont to lift thy heavy locks. It comes to the hall, but thou art not there; its voice is mournful among the arms of thy fathers. Go with thy rustling wing, O breeze! and sigh on Malvina's tomb. It rises yonder beneath the rock, at the blue stream of Lutha. The maids[g] are departed to their place; and thou alone, O breeze, mournest there."

But who comes from the dusky west, supported on a cloud? A smile is on his grey watery face; his locks of mist fly on the wind: he bends forward on his airy spear: it is thy father, Malvina! " Why shinest thou so soon on our clouds," he says, " O lovely light of Lutha? But thou wert sad, my daughter, for thy friends were passed away. The sons of little men[h] were in the hall: and none remained of the heroes, but Ossian, king of spears."

And dost thou remember Ossian, car-borne Toscar[i], son of Conloch? the battles of our youth were many; our swords went together to the field. They saw us coming like two falling rocks; and the sons of the stranger fled. " There come the warriors of Cona." they said; their steps are in the paths of the vanquished?" Draw near, son of Alpin, to the song of the aged. The actions of other times are in my soul: my memory beams on the days that are past! On the days of the mighty Toscar, when our path was in the deep. Draw near, son of Alpin, to the last sound of the voice of Cona.

The king of Morven commanded, and I raised my sails to the wind. Toscar, chief of Latha, stood at my

f Ossian; who had a great friendship for Malvina, both on account of her love for his son Oscar, and her attention to his own poems.

g That is, the young virgins who sung the funeral elegy over her tomb.

h Ossian, by way of disrespect, calls those who succeeded the heroes whose actions he celebrates, " the sons of little men." Tradition is entirely silent concerning what passed in the north, immediately after the death of Fingal and all his heroes; but it appears, from the term of ignominy just mentioned, that the actions of their successors were not to be compared to those of the renowned Fingalians.

i Toscar was the son of that Conloch, who was also father to the lady whose unfortunate death is related in the last episode of the second book of Fingal.

side, as I rode on the dark-blue wave. Our course was to sea-surrounded Berrathon[k], the isle of many storms. There dwelt, with his locks of age, the stately strength of Larthmor. Larthmor who spread the feast of shells to Comhal's mighty son, when he went to Starno's halls, in the days of Agandecca. But when the chief was old, the pride of his son arose, the pride of fair-haired Uthal, the love of a thousand maids. He bound the aged Larthmor, and dwelt in his sounding halls.

Long pined the king in his cave, beside his rolling sea. Morning did not come to his dwelling; nor the burning oak by night. But the wind of ocean was there, and the parting beam of the moon. The red star looked on the king, when it trembled on the western wave. Snitho came to Selma's hall: Snitho, companion of Larthmor's youth. He told of the king of Berrathon: the wrath of Fingal rose. Thrice he assumed the spear, resolved to stretch his hand to Uthal. But the memory[l] of his actions rose before the king, and he sent his son and Toscar. Our joy was great on the rolling sea; and we often half unsheathed our swords. For never before had we fought alone in the battles of the spear.

Night came down on the ocean; the winds departed on their wings. Cold and pale is the moon. The red stars lift their heads. Our course is slow along the coast of Berrathon; the white waves tumble on the rocks. "What voice is that," said Toscar, "which comes between the sounds of the wave? It is soft, but mournful, like the voice of departed bards. But I behold the maid[m], she sits on the rock alone. Her head bends on her arm of snow: her dark hair is in the wind. Hear, son of Fingal, her song; it is smooth as the gliding waters of Lavath." We came to the silent bay, and heard the maid of night.

k Bar-rathon, 'a promontory in the midst of waves.'

l The meaning of the poet is, that Fingal remembered his own great actions, and consequently would not sully them by engaging in a petty war against Uthal, who was so far his inferior in valour and power.

m Nina-thoma the daughter of Torthoma, who had been confined to a desart island by her lover Uthal.

"How long will ye roll about me, blue-tumbling waters of ocean? My dwelling was not always in caves, nor beneath the whistling tree. The feast was spread in Torthoma's hall; my father delighted in my voice. The youths beheld me in the steps of my loveliness, and they blessed the dark-haired Nina-thoma. It was then thou didst come, O Uthal! like the son of heaven. The souls of the virgins are thine, son of generous Larthmor! But why dost thou leave me alone in the midst of roaring waters? Was my soul dark with thy death? Did my white hand lift the sword? Why then hast thou left me alone, king of high Finthormo[n]?

The tear started from my eye when I heard the voice of the maid. I stood before her in my arms, and spoke the words of peace. "Lovely dweller of the cave, what sigh is in that breast? Shall Ossian lift his sword in thy presence, the destruction of thy foes? Daughter of Torthoma, rise, I have heard the words of thy grief. The race of Morven are around thee, who never injured the weak. Come to our dark-bosomed ship, thou brighter than that setting moon. Our course is to the rocky Berrathon, to the echoing walls of Finthormo." She came in her beauty, she came with all her lovely steps. Silent joy brightened in her face, as when the shadows fly from the field of spring; the blue stream is rolling in brightness, and the green bush bends over its course.

The morning rose with its beams. We came to Rothma's bay. A boar rushed from the wood; my spear pierced his side. I rejoiced over the blood[o], and foresaw my growing fame. But now the sound of Uthal's train came from the high Finthormo; they spread over the heath to the chase of the boar. Himself comes slowly on, in the pride of his strength. He lifts two pointed spears. On his side is the hero's sword. Three youths carry his polish'd bows: the

n Finthormo, the palace of Uthal. The names in this episode are not of a Celtic original: which makes it probable that Ossian founds his poem on a true story.

o Ossian thought that his killing the boar, on his first landing in Berrathon, was a good omen of his future success in that island. The present Highlanders look with a degree of superstition, upon the success of their first action, after they have engaged in any desperate undertaking.

bounding of five dogs is before him. His warriors move on at a distance, admiring the steps of the king. Stately was the son of Larthmor! but his soul was dark. Dark as the troubled face of the moon when it foretells the storms.

We rose on the heath before the king; he stopt in the midst of his course. His warriors gathered around, and a grey-haired bard advanced. "Whence are the sons of the strangers?" begun the bard. The children of the unhappy come to Berrathon; to the sword of car-borne Uthal. He spreads no feast in the hall: the blood of strangers is on his streams. If from Selma's walls ye come, from the mossy walls of Fingal, chuse three youths to go to your king to tell of the fall of his people. Perhaps the hero may come and pour his blood on Uthal's sword: so shall the fame of Finthormo arise, like the growing tree of the vale."

"Never will I rise, O bard," I said in the pride of my wrath. "He would shrink in the presence of Fingal; whose eyes are the flames of death. The son of Comhal comes, and the kings vanish in his presence; they are rolled together, like mist, by the breath of his rage. Shall three tell to Fingal, that his people fell? Yes! they may tell it, bard! but his people shall fall with fame."

I stood in the darkness of my strength: Toscar drew his sword at my side. The foe came on like a stream: the mingled sound of death arose. Man took man, shield met shield; steel mixed its beams with steel. Darts hiss through air; spears ring on mails; and swords on broken bucklers bound. As the noise of an aged grove beneath the roaring wind, when a thousand ghosts break the trees by night, such was the din of arms. But Uthal fell beneath my sword; and the sons of Berrathon fled. It was then I saw him in his beauty, and the tear hung in my eye. Thou art fallen [p], young tree," I said, "with all thy beauty round thee.

[p] To mourn over the fall of their enemies was a practice universal among Ossian's heroes. This is more agreeable to humanity, than the shameful insulting the dead, so common in Homer, and after him servilely copied by all his imitators, the humane Virgil not excepted, who have been more successful in borrowing the imperfections of that great poem, than in the imitations of beauties.

Thou art fallen on thy plains, and the field is bare. The winds come from the desart, and there is no sound in thy leaves: Lovely art thou in death, son of car-borne Larthmor."

Nina-thoma sat on the shore, and heard the sound of battle. She turned her red eyes on Lethmal the grey-haired bard of Selma, for he had remained on the coast with the daughter of Torthoma. " Son of the times of old!" she said, " I hear the noise of death. Thy friends have met with Uthal, and the chief is low! O that I had remained on the rock, inclosed with the tumbling waves! Then would my soul be sad, but his death would not reach my ear. Art thou fallen on thy heath, O son of high Finthormo! thou didst leave me on a rock, but my soul was full of thee. Son of high Finthormo! art thou fallen on thy heath?"

She rose pale in her tears, and saw the bloody shield of Uthal; she saw it in Ossian's hand; her steps were distracted on the heath. She flew; she found him; she fell. Her soul came forth in a sigh. Her hair is spread on his face. My bursting tears descend. A tomb arose on the unhappy, and my song was heard. " Rest, hapless children of youth! at the noise of that mossy stream. The virgins will see your tomb at the chase, and turn away their weeping eyes. Your fame will be in the song; the voice of the harp will be heard in your praise. The daughters of Selma shall hear it; and your renown shall be in other lands. Rest, children of youth, at the noise of the mossy stream."

Two days we remained on the coast. The heroes of Berrathon convened. We brought Larthmor to his halls; the feast of shells was spread. The joy of the aged was great; he looked to the arms of his fathers: the arms which he left in his hall, when the pride of Uthal arose. We were renowned before Larthmor, and he blessed the chiefs of Morven; but he knew not that his son was low, the stately strength of Uthal. They had told that he had retired to the woods, with the tears of grief; they had told it, but he was silent in the tomb of Rothma's heath.

On the fourth day we raised our sails to the roar of the northern wind. Larthmor came to the coast, and his bards raised the song. The joy of the king was great; he looked to Rothma's gloomy heath; he saw the tomb of his son: and the memory of Uthal rose. "Who of my heroes," he said, "lies there? He seems to have been the king of spears. Was he renowned in my halls, before the pride of Uthal rose? Ye are silent, sons of Berrathon! Is the king of heroes low? My heart melts for thee, O Uthal! though thy hand was against thy father! O that I had remained in the cave! that my son had dwelt in Finthormo! I might have heard the tread of his feet, when he went to the chase of the boar. I might have heard his voice on the blast of my cave. Then would my soul be glad: but now darkness dwells in my halls."

Such were my deeds, son of Alpin, when the arm of my youth was strong; such were[q] the actions of Toscar, the car-borne son of Conloch. But Toscar is on his flying cloud; and I am alone at Lutha: my voice is like the last sound of the wind, when it forsakes the woods. But Ossian shall not be long alone, he sees the mist that shall receive his ghost. He beholds the mist that shall form his robe, when he appears on his hills. The sons of little men shall behold me, and admire the stature of the chiefs of old. They shall creep to their caves, and look to the sky with fear: for my steps shall be in the clouds, and darkness shall roll on my side.

Lead, son of Alpin, lead the aged to his woods. The winds begin to rise. The dark wave of the lake resounds. Bends there not a tree from Mora with its branches bare? It bends, son of Alpin, in the rustling blast. My harp hangs on a blasted branch. The sound of its strings is mournful. Does the wind touch thee, O harp, or is it some passing ghost! It is the hand of Malvina! but bring me the harp, son of Alpin; another song shall arise. My soul shall depart in the sound; my fathers shall hear it in their airy hall. Their

q Ossian speaks.

dim faces shall hang with joy from their clouds ; and their hands receive their son. The aged oak bends over the stream. It sighs with all its moss. The withered fern whistles near, and mixes, as it waves, with Ossian's hair.

Strike the harp and raise the song : be near with all your wings, ye winds. Bear the mournful sound away to Fingal's airy hall. Bear it to Fingal's hall, that he may hear the voice of his son ; the voice of him that praised the mighty.

The blast of the north opens thy gates, O king, and I behold thee sitting on mist, dimly gleaming in all thine arms. Thy form now is not the terror of the valiant : but like a watery cloud ; when we see the stars behind it with their weeping eyes. Thy shield is like the aged moon : thy sword a vapour half kindled with fire : Dim and feeble is the chief who travelled in brightness before. But thy steps [r] are on the winds of the desart, and the storms darken in thy hand. Thou takest the sun in thy wrath, and hidest him in thy clouds. The sons of little men are afraid ; and a thousand showers descend. But when thou comest forth in thy mildness ; the gale of the morning is near thy course. The sun laughs in his blue fields ; and the grey stream winds in its valley. The bushes shake their green heads in the wind. The roes bound towards the desart.

But there is a murmur on the heath ! the stormy winds abate ! I hear the voice of Fingal. Long has it been absent from mine ear ! " Come, Ossian, come away," he says : " Fingal has received his fame. We passed away, like flames that had shone for a season ; our departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, our fame is in the four grey stones. The voice of Ossian has been heard ; and the harp was strung in Selma. Come, Ossian, come away," he says, " and fly with thy fathers on clouds."

r This magnificent description of the power of Fingal over the winds and storms, and the image of his taking the sun, and hiding him in the clouds, do not correspond with the preceding paragraph, where he is represented as a feeble ghost, and no more the " terror of the valiant ;" but it agrees with the notions of the times concerning the deceased, who it was supposed had the command of the winds and storms, but took no concern in the affairs of men.

And come I will, thou king of men! the life of Ossian fails. I begin to vanish on Cona; and my steps are not seen in Selma. Beside the stone of Mora I shall fall asleep. The winds whistling in my grey hair shall not waken me. Depart on thy wings, O wind: thou canst not disturb the rest of the bard. The night is long, but his eyes are heavy; depart thou rustling blast.

But why art thou sad, son of Fingal! Why grows the cloud of thy soul? The chiefs of other times are departed; they have gone without their fame. The sons of future years shall pass away; and another race arise. The people are like the waves of ocean: like the leaves of woody Morven, they pass away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their green heads. Did thy beauty last, O Ryno[1]? Stood the strength of car-borne Oscar: Fingal himself passed away; and the halls of his fathers forgot his steps. And shalt thou remain, aged bard! when the mighty have failed? But my fame shall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven; which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind.

[1] Ryno the son of Fingal, who was killed in Ireland, in the war against Swaran, (Fingal, B. V.) was remarkable for the beauty of his person, his swiftness, and great exploits. Minvane, the daughter of Morni, and sister to Gaul, was in love with Ryno. The following is her lamentation over her lover.

SHE, blushing sad, from Morven's rocks, bends over the darkly-rolling sea. She saw the youths in all their arms. Where, Ryno, where art thou?

Our dark looks told that he was low! That, pale, the hero flew on clouds! That in the grass of Morven's hills, his feeble voice was heard in wind

And is the son of Fingal fallen, on Ullin's mossy plains? Strong is the arm that conquered him! Ah me! I am alone.

Alone I will not be, ye winds! that lift my dark-brown hair. My sighs will not long mix with your stream; for I must sleep with Ryno.

I see thee not with beauty's steps returning from the chase. The night is round Minvane's love, and silence dwells with Ryno.

Where are thy dogs, and where thy bow? Thy shield that was so strong? Thy sword like heaven's descending fire? The bloody spear of Ryno!

I see them mixed in thy ship; I see them stained with blood. No arms are in thy narrow hall, O darkly-dwelling Ryno!

When will the morning come, and say, Arise thou king of spears! arise, the hunters are abroad. The hinds are near thee, Ryno!

Away, thou fair-haired morning, away! the slumbering king hears thee not. The hinds bound over his narrow tomb; for death dwells round young Ryno.

But I will tread softly, my king! and steal to the bed of thy repose. Minvane will lie in silence near her slumbering Ryno.

The maids shall seek me; but they shall not find me; they shall follow my departure with songs. But I will not hear you, O maids! I sleep with fair-haired Ryno.

TEMORA:

AN EPIC POEM.

IN EIGHT BOOKS.

The Argument.

Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul, lord of Atha, in Connaught, the most potent chief of the race of the Firbolg, having murdered, at Temora the royal palace, Cormac the son of Artho, the young king of Ireland, usurped the throne. Cormac was lineally descended from Conar the son of Trenmor, the great grandfather of Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the western coast of Scotland. Fingal resented the behaviour of Cairbar, and resolved to pass over into Ireland, with an army, to re-establish the royal family on the Irish throne. Early intelligence of his design coming to Cairbar, he assembled some of his tribes in Ulster, and at the same time ordered his brother Cathmor to follow him speedily with an army, from Temora. Such was the situation of affairs when the Caledonian fleet appeared on the coast of Ulster.

The poem opens in the morning. Cairbar is represented as retired from the rest of the army, when one of his scouts brought him news of the landing of Fingal. He assembles a council of his chiefs. Foldath, the chief of Moma, haughtily despises the enemy; and is reprimanded warmly by Malthos. Cairbar, after hearing their debate, orders a feast to be prepared, to which, by his bard Olla, he invites Oscar the son of Ossian; resolving to pick a quarrel with that hero, and to have some pretext for killing him. Oscar came to the feast; the quarrel happened: the followers of both fought, and Cairbar and Oscar fell by mutual wounds. The noise of the battle reached Fingal's army. The king came on, to the relief of Oscar, and the Irish fell back to the army of Cathmor, who was advanced to the banks of the river Lubar, on the heath of Moi-lena. Fingal, after mourning over his grandson, ordered Ullin the chief of his bards to carry his body to Morven, to be there interred. Night coming on, Althan, the son of Conachar, relates to the king the particulars of the murder of Cormac. Fillan the son of Fingal, is sent to observe the motions of Cathmor by night; which concludes the action of the first day. The scene of this book is a plain, near the hill of Mora, which rose on the borders of the heath of Moi-lena in Ulster.

BOOK I.

THE blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills, with aged oaks, surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there: on its banks stood Cairbar [a] of Atha. His spear supports the king: the red eyes of the king are sad. Cormac rises

[a] Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul, was descended lineally from Larthon the chief of the Firbolg, the first colony who settled in the south of Ireland. The Caël were in possession of the northern coast of that kingdom, and the first monarchs of Ireland were of their race. Hence arose those differences between the two nations, which terminated, at last, in the murder of Cormac, and the usurpation of Cairbar, lord of Atha, who is mentioned in this place.

n his soul, with all his ghastly wounds. The grey orm of the youth appears in darkness; blood pours rom his airy sides. Cairbar thrice threw his spear on earth; and thrice he stroked his beard. His steps are short; he often stops, and tosses his sinewy arms. He s like a cloud in the desart, that varies its form to every blast: the valleys are sad around, and fear, by turns, the shower.

The king, at length, resumed his soul, and took his pointed spear. He turned his eyes to Moi-lena. The scouts of blue ocean came. They came with steps of fear, and often looked behind. Cairbar knew that the mighty were near, and called his gloomy chiefs.

The sounding steps of his warriors came. They drew, at once, their swords. There Morlath [b] stood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair sighs in wind. Red-haired Cormar bends on his spear, and rolls his side-long-looking eyes. Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. Foldath stands, like an oozy rock that covers his dark sides with foam. His spear is like Slimora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle; and his red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded car-borne Cairbar, when the scout of ocean came, Mor-annal from streamy Moi-lena. His eyes hang forward from his face, his lips are trembling pale.

"Do the chiefs of Erin stand," he said, "silent as the grove of evening? Stand they, like a silent wood, and Fingal on the coast, Fingal, the terrible in battle, the king of streamy Morven!" "Hast thou seen the warrior?" said Cairbar with a sigh. "Are his heroes many on the coast? Lifts he the spear of battle? or

b Morlath, 'great in the day of battle.' Hidalla, 'mildly-looking hero.' Cormar 'expert at sea.' Malth-os, 'slow to speak. Foldath, 'generous.'

Foldath, who is here strongly marked, makes a great figure in the sequel of the poem. His fierce, uncomplying character is sustained throughout. He seems, from a passage in the second book, to have been Cairbar's greatest confident, and to have had a principal hand in the conspiracy against Cormac king of Ireland. His tribe was one of the most considerable of the race of the Firbolg.

c Mor-annal here alludes to the particular appearance of Fingal's spear. If a man upon his landing in a strange country kept the point of his spear forward, it denoted, in those days, that he came in a hostile manner, and accordingly he was treated as an enemy; if he kept the point behind him, it was a token of friendship, and he was immediately invited to the feast, according to the hospitality of the times.

comes the king in peace?" "In peace he comes not Cairbar. I have seen his forward spear [c]. It is a me teor of death; the blood of thousands is on his steel He came first to the shore, strong in the grey hair o age. Full rose his sinewy limbs, as he strode in hi might. That sword is by his side which gives no se cond [d] wound. His shield is terrible, like the blood moon ascending through a storm. Then came Ossian king of songs; and Morni's son, the first of men. Con nal leaps forward on his spear. Dermid spreads hi dark-brown locks. Fillan bends his bow, the youn hunter of streamy Moruth. But who is that befor them, like the dreadful course of a stream? It is th son of Ossian, bright between his locks. His long hai falls on his back. His dark brows are half-inclosed i steel. His sword hangs loose on his side. His spea glitters as he moves. I fled from his terrible eyes, kin of high Temora."

"Then fly, thou feeble man," said Foldath in gloc my wrath. "Fly to the grey streams of thy land, so of the little soul? Have not I seen that Oscar? I behel the chief in war. He is of the mighty in danger; bu there are others who lift the spear. Erin has many sor as brave, king of Temora of Groves! Let Foldath mee him in the strength of his course, and stop this might stream. My spear is covered with the blood of th valiant; my shield is like the wall of Tura.

"Shall Foldath [e] alone meet the foe?" replied th dark-browed Malthos. "Are they not numerous o our coast, like the waters of many streams? Are n these the chiefs who vanquished Swaran, when the soi of Erin fled? And shall Foldath meet their brave heroes? Foldath of the heart of pride! take th strength of the people; and let Malthos come. M

d This was the famous sword of Fingal, made by Luno, a smith of Lochlin, and af him poetically called the son of Luno: it is said of this sword, that it killed a man very stroke; that Fingal never used it but in times of the greatest danger.

e The opposite characters of Foldath and Malthos are strongly marked in subseque parts of the poem. They appear always in opposition. The feuds between their fa lies, which were the source of their hatred to one another, are mentioned in otl poems.

sword is red with slaughter, but who has heard my words[f]?"

"Sons of green Erin," said Hidalla[g], "let not Fingal hear your words. The foe might rejoice, and his arm be strong in the land. Ye are brave, O warriors! and like the storms of the desart; they meet the rocks without fear, and overturn the woods. But let us move in our strength, slow as a gathered cloud. Then shall the mighty tremble; the spear shall fall from the hand of the valiant. We see the cloud of death, they will say, while shadows fly over their face. Fingal will mourn in his age, and see his flying fame. The steps of his chiefs will cease in Morven: the moss of years shall grow in Selma."

Cairbar heard their words, in silence, like the cloud of a shower: it stands dark on Cromla, till the lightning bursts its sides: the valley gleams with red light, the spirits of the storm rejoice. So stood the silent king of Temora; at length his words are heard.

"Spread the feast on Moi-lena: let my hundred bards attend. Thou, red-haired Olla, take the harp of the king. Go to Oscar, chief of swords, and bid him to our feast. To-day we feast and hear the song; to-morrow break the spear. Tell him that I have raised the tomb of Cathol[b]: that bards have sung to his ghost. Tell him that Cairbar has head his fame at the stream of resounding Carun[i]. Cathmor[k] is not here, Borbar-

[f] That is, Who has heard my vaunting? He intends the expression as a rebuke to the self-praise of Foldath.

[g] Hidalla was the chief of Clonra, a small district on the of lake of Lego. The beauty of his person, his eloquence, and genius for poetry, are afterwards mentioned.

[b] Cathol the son of Maronnan, or Moran, was murdered by Cairbar for his attachment to the family of Cormac. He had attended Oscar to the war of Iuis-thona, where they contracted a great friendship for one another. Oscar, immediately after the death of Cathol, had sent a formal challenge to Cairbar, which he prudently declined, but conceived a secret hatred against Oscar, and had beforehand contrived to kill him at the feast, to which he here invites him.

[i] He alludes to the battle of Oscar against Caros, king of ships; who is supposed to be the same with Carausius the usurper.

[k] Cathmor, 'great in battle,' the son of Borbar-duthul, and brother of Cairbar king of Ireland, had, before the insurrection of the Firbolg, passed over into Inis-huna, supposed to be a part of South Britain, to assist Connor king of that place against his enemies. Cathmor was successful in war; but, in the course of it, Connor was either killed, or died a natural death. Cairbar, upon intelligence of the designs of Fingal to dethrone him, had dispatched a messenger for Cathmor, who returned into Ireland a few days before the opening of the poem.

Cairbar here takes advantage of his brother's absence, to perpetrate his ungenerous designs against Oscar; for the noble spirit of Cathmor, had he been present, would not have permitted the laws of hospitality, for which he was so renowned himself, to be

duthul's generous race. He is not here with his thousands, and our arms are weak. Cathmor is a foe to strife at the feast: his soul is bright as that sun. But Cairbar shall fight with Oscar, chiefs of the woody Temora! His words for Cathol were many; the wrath of Cairbar burns. He shall fall on Moi-lena: my fame shall rise in blood."

Their faces brightened round with joy. They spread over Moi-lena. The feast of shells is prepared. The songs of bards arise. We heard[1] the voice of joy on the coast: we thought that mighty Cathmor came. Cathmor the friend of strangers! the brother of red-haired Cairbar. Their souls were not the same. The light of heaven was in the bosom of Cathmor. His towers rose on the banks of Atha: seven paths led to his halls. Seven chiefs stood on the path, and called the stranger to the feast! But Cathmor dwelt in the wood to avoid the voice of praise.

Olla came with his songs. Oscar came to Cairbar's feast. Three hundred warriors strode along Moi-lena of the streams. The grey dogs bounded on the heath, their howling reached afar. Fingal saw the departing hero; the soul of the king was sad. He dreaded Cairbar's gloomy thoughts, amidst the feast of shells. My son raised high the spear of Cormac: an hundred bards met him with songs. Cairbar concealed with smiles the death that was dark in his soul. The feast is spread;

violated. The two brothers form a contrast; we do not detest the mean soul of Cairbar more, than we admire the disinterested and generous mind of Cathmor.

[1] Fingal's army heard the joy that was in Cairbar's camp. The character given of Cathmor is agreeable to the times. Some, through ostentation, were hospitable; and others fell naturally into a custom handed down from their ancestors. But what marks strongly the character of Cathmor, is his aversion to praise; for he is represented to dwell in a wood to avoid the thanks of his guests; which is still a higher degree of generosity than that of Axylus in Homer; for the poet does not say, but the good man might, at the head of his own table, have heard with pleasure the praise bestowed on him by the people he entertained

No nation in the world carried hospitality to a greater length than the ancient Scots. It was even infamous, for many ages, for a man of condition to have the door of his house shut at all, "lest," as the bards express it, "the stranger should come and behold his contracted soul." Some of the chiefs were possessed of this hospitable disposition to an extravagant degree; and the bards, perhaps upon a selfish account, never failed to recommend it, in their eulogiums. "Cean-ua' na dai', or the point to which all the roads of the strangers lead," was an invariable epithet given by them to the chiefs: on the contrary, they distinguish the inhospitable by the title of "the cloud which the strangers shun." This last, however, was so uncommon, that in all the old poets I have ever met with, I found but one man branded with this ignominious appellation; and that, perhaps, only founded upon a private quarrel, which subsisted between him and the patron of the bard who wrote the poem.

the shells resound: joy brightens the face of the host. But it was like the parting beam of the sun, when he is to hide his red head in a storm.

Cairbar rose in his arms; darkness gathered on his brow. The hundred harps ceased at once. The clang[m] of shields was heard. Far distant on the heath, Olla raised his song of woe. My son knew the sign of death, and rising, seized his spear. "Oscar!" said the dark-red Cairbar, "I behold the spear[n] of Inisfail. The spear of Temora[o] glitters in thy hand, son of woody Morven! It was the pride of an hundred[p] kings, the death of heroes of old. Yield it, son of Ossian, yield it to car-borne Cairbar."

"Shall I yield," Oscar replied, "the gift of Erin's injured king: the gift of fair-haired Cormac, when Oscar scattered his foes? I came to Cormac's halls of joy, when Swaran fled from Fingal. Gladness rose in the face of youth: he gave the spear of Temora. Nor did he give it to the feeble, O Cairbar, neither to the weak in soul. The darkness of thy face is no storm to me; nor are thine eyes the flames of death. Do I fear thy clanging shield? Tremble I at Olla's song? No: Cairbar, frighten the feeble, Oscar is a rock."

"And wilt thou not yield the spear?" replied the rising pride of Cairbar. "Are thy words so mighty because Fingal is near? Fingal with aged locks from Morven's hundred groves! He has fought with little men. But he must vanish from Cairbar, like a thin pillar of mist before the winds of Atha[q]!" "Were he who fought with little men near Atha's darkening chief; Atha's darkening chief would yield green Erin to avoid

m When a chief was determined to kill a person already in his power, it was usual to signify that his death was intended, by the sound of a shield struck with the blunt end of a spear; at the same time that a bard at a distance raised the death-song. A ceremony of another kind was long used in Scotland upon such occasions. Every body has heard that a bull's head was served up to Lord Douglas in the castle of Edinburgh, as a certain signal of his approaching death.

n Cormac, the son of Arth, had given the spear, which is here the foundation of the quarrel, to Oscar, when he came to congratulate him upon Swaran's being expelled from Ireland.

o Ti-mor-rath, 'the house of good fortune,' the name of the royal palace of the supreme king of Ireland.

p Hundred is here an indefinite number, and is only intended to express a great many. It was probably the hyperbolical phrases of bards, that gave the first hint to the Irish senachies to place the origin of their monarchy in so remote a period as they have done.

q Atha, 'shallow river:' the name of Cairbar's seat in Connaught.

his rage. Speak not of the mighty, O Cairbar! but turn thy sword on me. Our strength is equal; but Fingal is renowned! the first of mortal men."

Their people saw the darkening chiefs. Their crowding steps are heard around. Their eyes roll in fire. A thousand swords are half-unsheathed. Red-haired Olla raised the song of battle: the trembling joy of Oscar's soul arose: the wonted joy of his soul when Fingal's horn was heard. Dark as the swelling wave of ocean before the rising winds, when it bends its head near a coast, came on the host of Cairbar.

Daughter of Toscar[r]! why that tear? He is not fallen yet. Many were the deaths of his arm before my hero fell!

Behold they fall before my son like the groves in the desart, when an angry ghost rushes through night, and takes their green heads in his hand! Morlath falls: Maronnan dies: Conachar trembles in his blood. Cairbar shrinks before Oscar's sword; and creeps in darkness behind his stone. He lifted the spear in secret, and pierced my Oscar's side. He falls forward on his shield: his knee sustains the chief. But still the spear is in his hand. See gloomy Cairbar[s] falls! The steel

r Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, to whom he addresses the part of the poem which relates to the death of Oscar her lover.

s The Irish historians place the death of Cairbar in the latter end of the third century: they say, he was killed in battle against Oscar the son of Ossian, but deny that he fell by his hand.

It is, however, certain, that the Irish historians disguise, in some measure, this part of their history. An Irish poem on this subject, which undoubtedly was the source of their information, concerning the battle of Gabhra, where Cairbar fell, is just now in my hands. The circumstances are less to the disadvantage of the character of Cairbar than those related by Ossian. As a translation of the poem (which, though evidently no very ancient composition, does not want poetical merit), would extend this note to too great a length, I shall only give the story of it in brief, with some extracts from the original Irish.

Oscar, says the Irish bard, was invited to a feast, at Temora, by Cairbar king of Ireland. A dispute arose between the two heroes, concerning the exchange of spears which was usually made between the guests and their host, upon such occasions. In the course of this altercation, Cairbar said, in a boastful manner, that he would hunt on the hills of Albion, and carry the spoils of it into Ireland, in spite of all the efforts of its inhabitants. The original words are:

Briathar buan sin; Briathar buan
A bheire dh an Cairbre rua'.
Gu tuga' se sealg, agus creach
A h' Albin an la'r na mhaireach.

Oscar replied, that the next day, he himself would carry into Albion the spoils of the five provinces of Ireland, in spite of the opposition of Cairbar.

Briathar eile an aghai' fin
A bheirea' an t'Oscar, og, calma
Gu'n tugadh se sealg, agus creach
Do dh'Albin an la'r na mhaireach, &c.

pierced his forehead, and divided his red hair behind. He lay, like a shattered rock, which Cromla shakes from its shaggy side. But never more shall Oscar rise! he leans on his bossy shield. His spear is in his terrible hand: Erin's sons stood distant and dark. Their shout arose, like crowded streams; Moi-lena echoed wide.

Fingal heard the sound; and took his father's spear. His steps are before us on the heath. He spoke the words of woe. "I hear the noise of war. Young Oscar is alone. Rise, sons of Morven; join the hero's sword."

Ossian rushed along the heath. Fillan bounded over Moi-lena. Fingal strode in his strength, and the light of his shield is terrible. The sons of Erin saw it far distant; they trembled in their souls. They knew that the wrath of the king arose: and they foresaw their death. We first arrived; we fought, and Erin's chiefs withstood our rage. But when the king came, in the sound of his course, what heart of steel could stand! Erin fled over Moi-lena. Death pursued their flight. We saw Oscar on his shield. We saw his blood around. Silence darkened every face. Each turned his back and wept. The king strove to hide his tears. His grey beard whistled in the wind. He bent his head above his son. His words were mixed with sighs.

"And art thou fallen, Oscar, in the midst of thy course! the heart of the aged beats over thee! He sees thy coming wars. The wars which ought to come he sees! But they are cut off from thy fame. When shall joy dwell at Selma? When shall grief depart from Morven? My sons fall by degrees: Fingal shall be the last of his race. The fame which I have received shall pass away: my age will be without friends. I shall sit a grey cloud in my hall: nor shall I hear the return of a son, in the midst of his sounding arms. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! never more shall Oscar rise!"

Oscar, in consequence of his threats, began to lay waste Ireland; but as he returned with the spoil into Ulster, through the narrow pass of Gabhra, (Caoil-ghlen Ghabhra), he was met by Cairbar, and a battle ensued, in which both the heroes fell by mutual wounds. The bard gives a very curious list of the followers of Oscar, as they marched to battle. They appear to have been five hundred in number, commanded, as the poet expresses it, by "five heroes of the blood of kings." This poem mentions Fingal, as arriving from Scotland, before Oscar died of his wounds.

And they did weep, O Fingal! dear was the hero to their souls. He went out to battle, and the foes vanished: he returned, in peace, amidst their joy. No father mourned his son slain in youth: no brother his brother of love. They fell, without tears, for the chief of the people was low! Bran[1] is howling at his feet; gloomy Luath is sad, for he had often led them to the chase; to the bounding roe of the desart.

When Oscar saw his friends around, his breast arose with sighs. "The groans," he said, "of aged chiefs, the howling of my dogs, the sudden bursts of songs of grief, have melted Oscar's soul. My soul, that never melted before; it was like the steel of my sword. Ossian, carry me to my hills! Raise the stones of my renown. Place the horn of the deer, and my sword, within my narrow dwelling. The torrent hereafter may raise the earth: the hunter may find the steel and say, "This has been Oscar's sword."

"And fallest thou, son of my fame? And shall I never see thee, Oscar? When others hear of their sons, I shall not hear of thee. The moss is on thy four grey stones: the mournful wind is there. The battle shall be fought without him: he shall not pursue the dark-brown hinds. When the warrior returns from battles, and tells of other lands; I have seen a tomb, he will say, by the roaring stream, the dark dwelling of a chief. He fell by car-borne Oscar, the first of mortal men. I, perhaps, shall hear his voice: and a beam of joy will rise in my soul."

The night would have descended in sorrow, and morning returned in the shadow of grief: our chiefs would have stood like cold dropping rocks on Moi-lena, and have forgot the war, did not the king disperse his grief, and raise his mighty voice. The chiefs, as new-wakened from dreams, lift up their heads around.

"How long on Moi-lena shall we weep; or pour our tears in Ullin? The mighty will not return. Oscar shall not rise in his strength. The valiant must fall

[1] Bran was one of Fingal's dogs. Bran signifies a mountain-stream.

one day, and be no more known on his hills. Where are our fathers, O warriors! the chiefs of the times of old? They have set like stars that have shone, we only hear the sound of their praise. But they were renowned in their day, the terror of other times. Thus shall we pass, O warriors, in the day of our fall. Then let us be renowned when we may; and leave our fame behind us, like the last beams of the sun, when he hides his red head in the west. Ullin, my aged bard! take the ship of the king. Carry Oscar to Selma of harps. Let the daughters of Morven weep. We shall fight in Erin for the race of fallen Cormac. The days of my years begin to fail; I feel the weakness of my arm. My fathers bend from their clouds, to receive their grey-haired son. But before I go hence, one beam of fame shall rise: so shall my days end, as my years begun, in fame: my life shall be one stream of light to bards of other times.

Ullin raised his white sails; the wind of the south came forth: he bounded on the waves towards Selma. I remained in my grief, but my words were not heard. The feast is spread on Moi-lena: an hundred heroes reared the tomb of Cairbar: but no song is raised over the chief: for his soul had been dark and bloody. The bards remembered the fall of Cormac! what could they say in Cairbar's praise?

The night came rolling down. The light of an hundred oaks arose. Fingal sat beneath a tree. Old Althan[u] stood in the midst. He told the tale of fallen Cormac. Althan the son of Conachar, the friend of car-borne Cuthullin: he dwelt with Cormac in windy Temora, when Semo's son fought with generous Torlath. The tale of Althan was mournful, and the tear was in his eye.

The[v] setting sun was yellow on Dora[w]. Grey evening began to descend. Temora's woods shook with

[u] Althan, the son of Conachar, was the chief bard of Arth, king of Ireland. After the death of Arth, Althan attended his son Cormac, and was present at his death. He had made his escape from Cairbar, by the means of Cathmor, and coming to Fingal, related, as here, the death of his master Cormac.

[v] Althan speaks.

[w] Doira, 'the woody side of a mountain;' it is here a hill in the neighbourhood of Temora.

the blast of the inconstant wind. A cloud, at length, gathered in the west, and a red star looked from behind its edge. I stood in the wood alone, and saw a ghost on the darkening air. His stride extended from hill to hill: his shield was dim on his side. It was the son of Semo: I knew the warrior's face. But he passed away in his blast; and all was dark around. My soul was sad. I went to the hall of shells. A thousand lights arose: the hundred bards had strung the harp. Cormac stood in the midst, like the morning star, when it rejoices on the eastern hill, and its young beams are bathed in showers. The sword of Artho[x] was in the hand of the king; and he looked with joy on its polished studs: thrice he strove to draw it, and thrice he failed; his yellow locks are spread on his shoulders: his cheeks of youth are red. I mourned over the beam of youth, for he was soon to set.

"Althan!" he said with a smile, "hast thou beheld my father? Heavy is the sword of the king, surely his arm was strong. O that I were like him in battle, when the rage of his wrath arose! then would I have met, like Cuthullin, the car-borne son of Cantela! but years may come on, O Althan! and my arm be strong. Hast thou heard of Semo's son, the chief of high Temora? He might have returned with his fame; for he promised to return to-night. My bards wait him with songs; my feast is spread in Temora."

I heard the king in silence. My tears began to flow. I hid them with my aged locks; but he perceived my grief. "Son of Conachar!" he said, "is the king of Tura[y] low? Why bursts thy sigh in secret, and why descends the tear? Comes the car-borne Torlath? or the sound of the red-haired Cairbar? They come! for I behold thy grief. Mossy Tura's king is low! Shall I not rush to battle? But I cannot lift the spear! O had mine arm the strength of Cuthullin, soon would

x Arth, or Artho, the father of Cormac king of Ireland.

y Cuthullin is called the king of Tura, from a castle of that name on the coast of Ulster, where he dwelt, before he undertook the management of the affairs of Ireland, in the minority of Cormac.

Cairbar fly; the fame of my fathers would be renewed; and the deeds of other times!"

He took his bow. The tears flow down from both his sparkling eyes. Grief saddens round: the bards bend forward from their hundred harps. The lone blast touched their trembling strings. The sound[z] is sad and low. A voice is heard at a distance, as of one in grief; it was Carril of other times, who came from dark Slimora[a]. He told of the death of Cuthullin, and of his mighty deeds. The people were scattered round his tomb: their arms lay on the ground. They had forgot the war, for he, their sire, was seen no more.

"But who," said the soft-voiced Carril, "come like the bounding roes? Their stature is like young trees of the plain, growing in a shower: Soft and ruddy are their cheeks; but fearless souls look forth from their eyes! Who but the sons of Usnoth[b], the car-borne chiefs of Etha. The people rise on every side, like the strength of an half-extinguished fire, when the winds come sudden from the desart on their rustling wings. The sound of Caithbat's[c] shield was heard. The heroes saw Cuthullin[d] in Nathos. So rolled his sparkling eyes; his steps are such on the heath. Battles are fought at Lego: the sword of Nathos prevails. Soon shalt thou behold him in thy halls, king of Temora of Groves."

"And soon may I behold the chief! replied the blue-eyed king. "But my soul is sad for Cuthullin; his voice was pleasant in mine ear. Often have we

z The prophetic sound, mentioned in other poems, which the harps of bards emitted before the death of a person worthy and renowned. It is here an omen of the death of Cormac, which soon after followed.

a Slimora, a hill in Connaught, near which Cuthullin was killed.

b Usnoth, chief of Etha, a district on the western coast of Scotland, had three sons, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, by Slissama the sister of Cuthullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland by their father, to learn the use of arms under their uncle, whose military fame was very great in that kingdom. They had just arrived in Ulster when the news of Cuthullin's death arrived. Nathos, the eldest of the three heroes, took the command of Cuthullin's army, and made head against Cairbar, the chief of Atha. Cairbar having at last murdered young king Cormac at Temora, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and the brothers were obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland. The sequel of their mournful story is related in the poem of Dar-thula.

c Caithbat was grandfather to Cuthullin; and his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family.

d That is, they saw a manifest likeness between the person of Nathos and Cuthullin.

moved, on Dora, to the chase of the dark-brown hinds his bow was unerring on the mountains. He spoke mighty men. He told of the deeds of my fathers; an I felt my joy. But sit thou at the feast, O bard, have often heard thy voice. Sing in the praise of Cu thullin; and of that mighty stranger[e]."

Day rose on woody Temora, with all the beams the east. Trathin came to the hall, the son of ol Gellama[f]. "I behold," he said, "A dark cloud in th desart, king of Inis-fail! a cloud it seemed at firs but now a crowd of men. One strides before them i his strength; his red hair flies in wind. His shiel glitters to the beam of the east. His spear is in h hand."

"Call him to the feast of Temora," replied the kin of Erin. "My hall is in the house of strangers, so of the generous Gellama! Perhaps it is the chief Etha, coming in the sound of his renown. Hai mighty[g] stranger! art thou of the friends of Cormac But Carril, he is dark and unlovely; and he draws h sword. Is that the son of Usnoth, bard of the times old?"

"It is not the son of Usnoth," said Carril, "but th chief of Atha. Why comest thou in thy arms to Te mora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? Let not thy swor rise against Cormac! Whither dost thou turn th speed?" He passed on in his darkness, and seized th hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death, and th rage of his eyes arose. Retire, thou gloomy chief Atha: Nathos comes with battle. Thou art bold i Cormac's hall, for his arm is weak. The sword ente ed the side of the king: he fell in the halls of his f thers. His fair hair is in the dust, his blood is smokir round.

"And art thou fallen in thy halls[h], O son of nob Artho? The shield of Cuthullin was not near, nor th spear of thy fathers. Mournful are the mountains

e Nathos the son of Usnoth.
f Geol-lamha, 'white-handed.'
g From this expression, we understand, that Cairbar had entered the palace of T mora in the midst of Cormac's speech.
h Althan speaks.

Erin, for the chief of the people is low! Blest be thy soul, O Cormac! thou art darkened in thy youth."

His words came to the ears of Cairbar, and he closed us[i] in the midst of darkness. He feared to stretch his sword to the bards[k], though his soul was dark. Long had we pined alone: at length, the noble Cathmor[l] came. He heard our voice from the cave; he turned the eye of his wrath on Cairbar.

"Chief of Atha!" he said, "how long wilt thou pain my soul! Thy heart is like the rock of the desart; and thy thoughts are dark. But thou art the brother of Cathmor, and he will fight thy battles. But Cathmor's soul was not like thine, thou feeble hand of war! The light of my bosom is stained with thy deeds: the bards will not sing of my renown. They may say, Cathmor was brave, but he fought for gloomy Cairbar. They will pass over my tomb in silence; my fame shall not be heard. Cairbar! loose the bards; they are the sons of other times. Their voice shall be heard in other years; after the kings of Temora have failed."

"We came forth at the words of the chief. We saw him in his strength. He was like thy youth, O Fingal, when thou first didst lift the spear. His face was like the plain of the sun, when it is bright: no darkness travelled over his brow. But he came with his thousands to Ullin; to aid the red-haired Cairbar: and now he comes to revenge his death, O king of woody Morven."

"And let him come," replied the king; I love a foe like Cathmor. His soul is great; his arm is strong; his battles are full of fame. But the little soul is a vapour that hovers round the marshy lake: it never rises on the green hill, lest the winds should meet it there: its dwelling is in the cave, it sends forth the dart of death. Our young heroes, O warriors, are

i That is, himself and Carril, as it afterwards appears.

k The persons of the bards were so sacred, that even he, who had just murdered his sovereign, feared to kill them.

l Cathmor appears the same disinterested hero upon every occasion. His humanity and generosity were unparalleled; in short he had no fault, but too much attachment to so bad a brother as Cairbar. His family connection with Cairbar prevails, as he expresses it, over every other consideration, and makes him engage in a war, of which he did not approve.

like the renown of our fathers. They fight in youth; they fall. their names are in the song. Fingal is amidst his darkening years. He must not fall, as an aged oak, across a secret stream. Near it are the steps of the hunter, as it lies beneath the wind. How has the tree fallen? He, whistling, strides along.

"Raise the song of joy, ye bards of Morven, that our souls may forget the past. The red stars look on us from the clouds, and silently descend. Soon shall the grey beam of the morning rise, and show us the foes of Cormac. Fillan! take the spear of the king; go to Mora's dark-brown side. Let thine eyes travel over the heath, like flames of fire. Observe the foes of Fingal, and the course of generous Cathmor. I hear a distant sound, like the falling of rocks in the desart. But strike thou thy shield, at times, that they may not come through night, and the fame of Morven cease. I begin to be alone, my son, and I dread the fall of my renown."

The voice of the bards arose. The king leaned on the shield of Trenmor. Sleep descended on his eyes; his future battles rose in his dreams. The host are sleeping around. Dark-haired Fillan observed the foe. His steps are on a distant hill: ye hear at times his clanging shield.

TEMORA:

The Argument.

This book opens, we may suppose, about midnight, with a soliloquy of Osslan, who had retired, from the rest of the army, to mourn for his son Oscar. Upon hearing the noise of Cathmor's army approaching, he went to find his brother Fillan, who kept the watch, on the hill of Mora, in the front of Fingal's army. In the conversation of the brothers, the episode of Conar the son of Trenmor, who was the first king of Ireland, is introduced, which lays open the origin of the contests between Cael and Firbolg, the two nations who first possessed themselves of that island. Ossian kindles a fire on Mora; upon which Cathmor desisted from the design he had formed of surprising the army of the Caledonians. He calls a council of his chiefs; reprimands Foldath for advising a night attack, as the Irish army were so much superior in number to the enemy. The bard Fonar introduces the story of Crothar, the ancestor of the king, which throws further light on the history of Ireland, and the original pretensions of the family of Atha, to the throne of that kingdom. The Irish chiefs lie down to rest, and Cathmor himself undertakes the watch. In his circuit round the army, he is met by Ossian. The interview of the two heroes is described. Cathmor obtains a promise from Ossian, to order a funeral elegy to be sung over the grave of Cairbar; it being the opinion of the times, that the souls of the dead could not be happy, till their elegies were sung by a bard. Morning comes. Cathmor and Ossian part: and the latter, casually meeting with Carril the son of Kinfena, sends that bard, with a funeral song, to the tomb of Cairbar.

BOOK II.

FATHER[m] of heroes, Trenmor! dweller of eddying winds! where the dark-red course of thunder marks the troubled clouds! Open thou thy stormy halls, and let the bards of old be near: let them draw near, with their songs and their half viewless harps. No dweller of misty valley comes; no hunter unknown at his streams; but the car-borne Oscar from the folds of war. Sudden is thy change, my son, from what thou wert on dark Moi-lena! The blast folds thee in its skirt, and rustles along the sky.—Dost thou not behold thy father, at the stream of night? The chiefs of Morven sleep far distant. They have lost no son. But ye have lost a hero, chiefs of streamy Morven! Who could equal his

[m] Though this book has little action, it is not the least important part of Temora. The poet, in several episodes, runs up the cause of the war to the very source. The first population of Ireland, the wars between the two nations who originally possessed that island, its first race of kings, and the revolutions of its government, are important facts, and are delivered with so little mixture of the fabulous, that one cannot help preferring this account to the improbable fictions of the Scottish and Irish historian. The Milesian fables of those gentlemen bear about them the marks of a late invention.

strength, when battle rolled against his side, like the darkness of crowded waters?—Why this cloud in Ossian's soul? It ought to burn in danger. Erin is near with her host. The king of Morven is alone. Alone thou shalt not be, my father, while I can lift the spear.

I rose, in my rattling arms. I listened to the wind of night. The shield of Fillan[n] is not heard. I shook for the son of Fingal. Why should the foe come, by night: and the dark-haired warrior fail? Distant, sullen murmurs rise: like the noise of the lake of Lego, when its waters shrink, in the days of frost, and all its bursting ice resounds. The people of Lara look to heaven, and foresee the storm. My steps are forward on the heath; the spear of Oscar is in my hand. Red stars looked from high. I gleamed along the night. I saw Fillan silent before me, bending forward from Mora's rock. He heard the shout of the foe; the joy of his soul arose. He heard my sounding tread, and turned his lifted spear.

"Comest thou, son of night, in peace? or dost thou meet my wrath? The foes of Fingal are mine. Speak, or fear my steel. I stand, not in vain, the shield of Morven's race."

"Never mayest thou stand in vain, son of blue eyed Clatho. Fingal begins to be alone; darkness gathers on the last of his days. Yet he has two[o] sons who

[n] We understand, from the preceding book, that Cathmor was near with an army. When Cairbar was killed, the tribes who attended him fell back to Cathmor; who, as it afterwards appears, had taken a resolution to surprise Fingal by night. Fillan was dispatched to the hill of Mora, which was in the front of the Caledonians, to observe the motions of Cathmor. In this situation were affairs, when Ossian, upon hearing the noise of the approaching enemy, went to find out his brother. Their conversation naturally introduces the episode concerning Conar the son of Trenmor, the first Irish monarch, which is so necessary to the understanding the foundation of the rebellion and usurpation of Cairbar and Cathmor. Fillan was the youngest of the sons of Fingal, then living. He and Bosmina, mentioned in the battle of Lora, were the only children of the king, by Clatho the daughter Cathulla king of Inistore, whom he had taken to wife, after the death of Ros-crana the daughter of Cormac Mac-Conar king of Ireland.

[o] That is, two sons in Ireland, Fergus, the second son of Fingal, was, at that time, on an expedition, which is mentioned in one of the lesser poems of Ossian. He, according to some traditions, was the ancestor of Fergus, the son of Erc, or Arcath, commonly called Fergus the second in the Scottish histories. The beginning of the reign of Fergus, over the Scots, is placed, by the most approved annals of Scotland, in the fourth year of the fifth age: a full century after the death of Ossian. The genealogy of his family is recorded thus by the Highland senachies; 'Fergus Mac-Arcath, Mac-Chongeal, Mac-Fergus, Mac-Fiongael na buai:' i. e. Fergus the son of Arcath, the son of Congal, the son of Fergus, the son of Fingal the victorious.' This subject is treated more at large, in the Dissertation prefixed to the poems.

ought to shine in war; who ought to be two beams of light near the steps of his departure."

"Son of Fingal," replied the youth, "it is not long since I raised the spear. Few are the marks of my sword in battle, but my sword is fire, the chiefs of Bolga[p] crowd around the shield of generous Cathmor. Their gathering is on the heath. Shall my steps approach their host? I yielded to Oscar alone, in the strife of the race, on Cona."

"Fillan, thou shalt not approach their host; nor fall before thy fame is known. My name is heard in song; when needful I advance. From the skirts of night I shall view their gleaming tribes. Why, Fillan, didst thou speak of Oscar, to call forth my sigh? I must forget[q] the warrior, till the storm is rolled away. Sadness ought not to dwell in danger, nor the tear in the eye of war. Our fathers forgot their fallen sons, till the noise of arms was past. Then sorrow returned to the tomb, and the song of bards arose."

"Conar[r] was the brother of Trathal, first of mortal men. His battles were on every coast. A thousand streams rolled down the blood of his foes. His nations gathered in Ullin, and they blessed the king; the king of the race of their fathers, from the land of hinds.

"The chiefs[s] of the south were gathered in the

p The southern parts of Ireland went, for some time, under the name of Bolga, from the Firbolg or Belgæ of Britain, who settled a colony there. Bolg, signifies a quiver, from which proceeds Firbolg, i. e. bow-men, so called from their using bows more than any of the neighbouring nations.

q It is remarkable, that after this passage, Oscar is not mentioned in all Temora. The situations of the characters who act in the poem are so interesting, that others foreign to the subject could not be introduced with any lustre. Though the episode, which follows, may seem to flow naturally enough from the brothers, yet I have shown, in a preceding note, and more at large in the Dissertation prefixed to this collection, that the poet had a farther design in view.

r Conar, the first king of Ireland, was the son of Trenmor, the great-grandfather of Fingal. It was on account of this family connection that Fingal was engaged in so many wars in the cause of the race of Conar. Though few of the actions of Trenmor are mentioned in Ossian's poems, yet, from the honourable appellation bestowed on him, we may conclude, that he was, in the days of the poet, the most renowned name in antiquity. The most probable opinion concerning him is, that he was the first who united the tribes of the Caledonians, and commanded them, in chief, against the incursions of the Romans. The genealogists of the North, have traced his family far back, and given a list of his ancestors to Cuan-mor nan lan, or Con-mor of the swords; who, according to them, was the first who crossed the great sea to Caledonia, from which circumstance his name proceeded, which signifies Great Ocean. Genealogies of so ancient a date, however, are little to be depended upon.

s The chiefs of the Firbolg, who possessed themselves of the south of Ireland prior, perhaps, to the settlement of the Cael of Caledonia and the Hebrides in Ulster. From the sequel, it appears, that the Firbolg were by much the most powerful nation: and it is probable that the Cael must have submitted to them, had they not received succours from their mother-country under the command of Conar.

darkness of their pride. In the horrid cave of Moma, they mixed their secret words. Thither often, they said, the spirits of their fathers came; showing their pale forms from the chinky rocks, and reminding them of the honour of Bolga. Why should Conar reign, the son of streamy Morven?

"They came forth, like the streams of the desart, with the roar of their hundred tribes. Conar was a rock before them: broken they rolled on every side. But often they returned, and the sons of Ullin fell. The king stood among the tombs of his warriors, and darkly bent his mournful face. His soul was rolled into itself; he marked the place where he was to fall; when Trathal came, in his strength, the chief of cloudy Morven. Nor did he come alone; Colgar† was at his side; Colgar the son of the king, and of white-bosomed Solin-corma.

"As Trenmor, clothed with meteors, descends from the halls of thunder, pouring the dark storm before him over the troubled sea; so Colgar descended to battle, and wasted the echoing field. His father rejoiced over the hero: but an arrow came. His tomb was raised without a tear. The king was to revenge his son. He lightened forward in battle, till Bolga yielded at her streams.

"When peace returned to the land, and his blue waves bore the king to Morven; then he remembered his son, and poured the silent tear. Thrice did the bards, at the cave of Furmono, call the soul of Calgar. They call him to the hills of his land; he heard them in his mist. Trathal placed his sword in the cave, that the spirit of his son might rejoice."

"Colgar", son of Trathal," said Fillan, "thou wert renowned in youth! But the king hath not marked my sword, bright-streaming on the field. I go forth with the crowd: I return, without my fame. But the foe

† Colg-er, 'fiercely looking warrior.' Sulin-corma, 'blue-eyes.' Colgar was the eldest of the sons of Trathal: Comhal, who was the father of Fingal, was very young when the present expedition to Ireland happened. It is remarkable, that, of all his ancestors, the poet makes the least mention of Comhal; which, probably, proceeded from the unfortunate life, and untimely death of that hero. From some passages concerning Elm, we learn, indeed, that he was brave, but he wanted conduct.

approaches, Ossian. I hear their murmur on the heath. The sound of their steps is like thunder, in the bosom of the ground, when the rocking hills shake their groves, and not a blast pours from the darkened sky."

Sudden I turned on my spear, and raised the flame of an oak on high. I spread it large on Mora's wind. Cathmor stopt in his course. Gleaming he stood, like a rock, on whose sides are the wandering of blasts; which seize its echoing streams and clothe them over with ice. So stood the friend [v] of strangers. The winds lift his heavy locks. Thou art the tallest of the race of Erin, king of streamy Atha!

"First of bards," said Cathmor, "Fonar [w], call the chiefs of Erin. Call red-haired Cormar, dark browed Malthos, the side-long-looking gloom of Maronnan. Let the pride of Foldath appear: the red-rolling eye of Turlotho. Nor let Hidalla be forgot; his voice, in danger, is like the sound of a shower, when it falls in the blasted vale, near Atha's falling stream."

They came, in their clanging arms. They bent forward to his voice, as if a spirit of their fathers spoke from a cloud of night. Dreadful shone they to the light; like the fall of the stream of Brumo [x], when the meteor lights it before the nightly stranger. Shuddering, he stops on his journey, and looks up for the beam of the morn.

Why [y] delights Foldath," said the king, "to pour the blood of foes by night? Fails his arm in battle, in

u The poet begins here to mark strongly the character of Fillan, who is to make so great a figure in the sequel of the poem. He has the impatience, the ambition, and fire, which are peculiar to a young hero. Kindled with the fame of Colgar, he forgets his untimely fall. From Fillan's expression in this passage, it would seem, that he was neglected by Fingal on account of his youth.

v Cathmor is distinguished by this honourable title, on account of his generosity to strangers, which was so great as to be remarkable, even in those days of hospitality.

w Fonar, 'the man of song.' Before the introduction of Christianity, a name was not imposed upon any person, till he had distinguished himself by some remarkable action, from which his name should be derived.

x Brumo was a place of worship (Fing. B. VI.) in Craca, which is supposed to be one of the isles of Shetland. It was thought that the spirits of the deceased haunted it, by night, which adds more terror to the description introduced here. The horrid circle of Brumo, where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of fear.

y From this passage it appears, that it was Foldath who had advised the night attack. The gloomy character of Foldath is properly contrasted to the generous, the open Cathmor.

the beams of day? Few are the foes before us; why should we clothe us in mist? The valiant delight to shine in the battles of their land. Thy counsel was in vain, chief of Moma; the eyes of Morven do not sleep. They are watchful as eagles on their mossy rocks. Let each collect beneath his cloud the strength of his roaring tribe. To-morrow I move, in light, to meet the foes of Bolga! Mighty[z] was he that is low, the race of Borbar-duthul!"

"Not unmarked," said Foldath, "were my steps before thy race. In light, I met the foes of Cairbar; the warrior praised my deeds. But his stone was raised without a tear! No bard sung[a] over Erin's king; and shall his foes rejoice along their mossy hills? No: they must not rejoice: he was the friend of Foldath. Our words were mixed, in secret, in Moma's silent cave; whilst thou, a boy in the field, pursuedst the thistle's beard. With Moma's sons I shall rush abroad, and find the foe on his dusky hills. Fingal shall lie without his song, the grey-haired king of Selma."

"Dost thou think, thou feeble man," replied the chief of Atha; "dost thou think that he can fall without his fame, in Erin? Could the bards be silent, at the tomb of the mighty Fingal? The song would burst in secret; and the spirit of the king rejoice. It is when thou shalt fall, that the bard shall forget the song. Thou art dark, chief of Moma, though thine arm is a tempest in war. Do I forget the king of Erin, in his narrow house? My soul is not lost to Cairbar, the brother of my love. I marked the bright beams of joy which travelled over his cloudy mind, when I returned with fame to Atha of the streams."

Tall they removed, beneath the words of the king; each to his own dark tribe; where humming, they rolled on the heath, faint-glittering to the stars: like waves in a rocky bay, before the nightly wind. Beneath an oak, lay the chief of Atha: his shield, a dusky

z By this exclamation, Cathmor intimates that he intends to revenge the death of his brother Cairbar.

a To have no funeral elegy sung over his tomb, was, in those days, reckoned the greatest misfortune that could befal a man: as his soul could not be otherwise admitted to the airy hall of his fathers.

round, hung high. Near him, against a rock, leaned the stranger[b] of Inis-huna: that beam of light, with wandering locks, from Lumon of the roes. At distance rose the voice of Fonar, with the deeds of the days of old. The voice fails, at times, in Lubar's growing roar.

"Crothar[c]," begun the bard, "first dwelt at Atha's mossy stream. A thousand[d] oaks, from the mountains, formed his echoing hall. The gathering of the people was there, around the feast of the blue-eyed king. But who, among the chiefs, was like the stately Crothar? Warriors kindled in his presence. The young sigh of virgins rose. In Alnecma[e] was the warrior honoured; the first of the race of Bolga.

"He pursued the chase in Ullin: on the moss-covered top of Drumardo. From the wood looked the daughter of Cathmin, the blue-rolling eye of Con-lama. Her sigh rose in secret. She bent her head, midst her wandering locks. The moon looked in at night, and saw the white-tossing of her arms; for she thought of the mighty Crothar, in the season of her dreams.

"Three days feasted Crothar with Cathmin. On the fourth they waked the hinds. Con-lama moved to the chase, with all her lovely steps. She met Crothar, in the narrow path. The bow fell, at once, from her hand. She turned her face away, and half-hid it with her locks. The love of Crothar rose. He brought the white-bo-

b By the stranger of Inis-huna, is meant Sulmalla, the daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna, the ancient name of that part of South Britain which is next to the Irish coast. She had followed Cathmor in disguise. Her story is related at large in the fourth book.

c Crothar was the ancestor of Cathmor, and the first of his family who had settled in Atha. It was in his time, that the first wars were kindled between the Firbolg and Cael. The propriety of the episode is evident; as the contest, which originally rose between Crothar and Conar, subsisted afterwards between their posterity, and was the foundation of the story of the poem.

d From this circumstance we may learn, that the art of building with stone was not known in Ireland so early as the days of Crothar. When the colony were long settled in the country, the arts of civil life began to increase among them; for we find mention made of the towers of Atha in the time of Cathmor, which could not well be applied to wooden buildings. In Caledonia they began very early to build with stone. None of the houses of Fingal, excepting Ti-foirmal, were of wood. Ti-foirmal was the great hall where the bards met to repeat their compositions annually, before they submitted them to the judgment of the king in Selma.

e Alnecma, or Alnecmacht, was the ancient name of Connaught. Ullin is still the Irish name of the province of Ulster. To avoid the multiplying of notes, I shall here give the signification of the names in this episode. Drumardo, 'high ridge.' Cathmin, 'calm in battle.' Con-lamha, 'soft hand.' Turloch, 'man of the quiver.' Cormal, 'blue eye.'

somed maid to Atha. Bards raised the song in her presence; joy dwelt round the daughter of Ullin.

"The pride of Torloch rose, a youth who loved the white-handed Con-lama. He came with battle to Alnecma; to Atha of the roes. Cormul went forth to the strife, the brother of car-borne Crothar. He went forth, but he fell, and the sigh of his people rose. Silent and tall, across the stream, came the darkening strength of Crothar: he rolled the foe from Alnecma, and returned, midst the joy of Con-lama.

"Battle on battle comes. Blood is poured on blood. The tombs of the valiant rise. Erin's clouds are hung round with ghosts. The chiefs of the south gathered round the echoing shield of Crothar. He came with death to the paths of the foe. The virgins wept, by the streams of Ullin. They looked to the mist of the hill, no hunter descended from its folds. Silence darkened in the land: blasts sighed lonely on grassy tombs.

"Descending like the eagle of heaven, with all his rustling wings, when he forsakes the blast with joy, the son of Trenmor came; Conar, arm of death, from Morven of the groves. He poured his might along green Erin. Death dimly strode behind his sword. The sons of Bolga fled from his course as from a stream, that bursting from the stormy desart, rolls the fields together with all their echoing woods. Crothar[f] met him in battle: but Alnecma's warriors fled. The king of Atha slowly retired, in the grief of his soul. He afterwards shone in the south; but dim as the sun of autumn, when he visits, in his robes of mist, Lara of dark streams. The withered grass is covered with dew: the field, though bright, is sad."

[f] The delicacy of the bard, with regard to Crothar, is remarkable. As he was the ancestor of Cathmor, to whom the episode is addressed, the bard softens his defeat, by only mentioning that his people fled. Cathmor took the song of Fonar in an unfavourable light. The bards, being of the order of the druids who pretended to a foreknowledge of events, were supposed to have supernatural prescience of futurity. The king thought, that the choice of Fonar's song proceeded from his foreseeing the unfortunate issue of the war; and that his own fate was shadowed out, in that of his ancestor Crothar. The attitude of the bard, after the reprimand of his patron, is picturesque and affecting. We admire the speech of Cathmor, but lament the effect it has on the feeling soul of the good old poet.

"Why wakes the bard before me," said Cathmor, "the memory of those who fled? Has some ghost, from his dusky cloud, bent forward to thine ear; to frighten Cathmor from the field with the tales of old? Dwellers of the folds of night, your voice is but a blast to me; which takes the grey thistle's head, and strews its beard on streams. Within my bosom is a voice, others hear it not. His soul forbids the king of Erin to shrink back from war."

Abashed the bard sinks back in night; retired, he bends above a stream, his thoughts are on the days of Atha, when Cathmor heard his song with joy. His tears come rolling down: the winds are in his beard.

Erin sleeps around. No sleep comes down on Cathmor's eyes. Dark, in his soul, he saw the spirit of low-laid Cairbar. He saw him, without his song, rolled in a blast of night. He rose. His steps were round the host. He struck, at times, his echoing shield. The sound reached Ossian's ear, on Mora of the hinds.

"Fillan," I said, "the foes advance. I hear the shield of war. Stand thou in the narrow path. Ossian shall mark their course. If over my fall the host shall pour; then be thy buckler heard. Awake the king on his heath, lest his fame should cease." I strode in all my rattling arms; wide-bounding over a stream that darkly winded, in the field, before the king of Atha. Green Atha's king, with lifted spear, came forward on my course. Now would we have mixed in horrid fray, like two contending ghosts, that bending forward, from two clouds, send forth the roaring winds; did not Ossian behold, on high, the helmet of Erin's kings. The eagle's wings spread above it, rustling in the breeze. A red star looked through the plumes. I stopt the lifted spear.

"The helmet of kings is before me! Who art thou, son of night? Shall Ossian's spear be renowned, when thou art lowly laid?" At once he dropt the gleaming lance. Growing before me seemed the form. He stretched his hand in night; and spoke the words of kings.

"Friend of the spirit of heroes, do I meet thee thus in shades? I have wished for thy stately steps in Atha, in the days of feasts. Why should my spear now arise? The sun must behold us, Ossian; when we bend, gleaming, in the strife. Future warriors shall mark the place; and shuddering think of other years. They shall mark it, like the haunt of ghosts, pleasant and dreadful to the soul."

"And shall it be forgot," I said, "where we meet in peace? Is the remembrance of battles always pleasant to the soul? Do not we behold, with joy, the place where our fathers feasted? But our eyes are full of tears, on the field of their wars. The stone shall rise, with all its moss, and speak to other years. Here Cathmor and Ossian met! the warriors met in peace! When thou, O stone, shalt fail: and Lubar's stream roll quite away! then shall the traveller come, and bend here, perhaps, in rest. When the darkened moon is rolled over his head, our shadowy forms may come, and, mixing with his dreams, remind him of this place. But why turnest thou so dark away, son of Borbar-duthul[g]?"

"Not forgot, son of Fingal, shall we ascend these winds. Our deeds are streams of light, before the eyes of bards. But darkness is rolled on Atha; the king is low, without his song: still there was a beam towards Cathmor from his stormy soul; like the moon, in a cloud, amidst the dark-red course of thunder."

"Son of Erin," I replied, "my wrath dwells not in his house[h]. My hatred flies, on eagle wing, from the foe that is low. He shall hear the song of bards; Cairbar shall rejoice on his winds."

Cathmor's swelling soul arose: he took the dagger from his side; and placed it gleaming in my hand. He

[g] Borbar-duthul, 'the surly warrior of the dark-brown eyes.' That his name suited well with his character, we may easily conceive, from the story delivered concerning him by Malthos, toward the end of the sixth book. He was the brother of that Colcuila, who is mentioned in the episode which begins the fourth book.

[h] The grave, often poetically called a house. This reply of Ossian abounds with the most exalted sentiments of a noble mind. Though of all men living he was the most injured by Cairbar, yet he laid aside his rage, as the foe was low. How different is this from the behaviour of the heroes of other ancient poems! 'Cynthius aurem vellit.'

placed it, in my hand, with sighs, and, silent, strode away. Mine eyes followed his departure. He dimly gleamed, like the form of a ghost, which meets a traveller by night, on the dark-skirted heath. His words are dark like songs of old: with morning strides the unfinished shade away.

Who[i] comes from Lubar's vale? From the folds of the morning mist? The drops of heaven are on his head. His steps are in the paths of the sad. It is Carril of other times. He comes from Tura's silent cave. I behold it dark in the rock, through the thin folds of mist. There, perhaps, Cuthullin sits on the blast which bends its trees. Pleasant is the song of the morning from the bard of Erin!

"The waves crowd away for fear: they hear the sound of thy coming forth, O sun! Terrible is thy beauty, son of heaven, when death is folded in thy locks; when thou rollest thy vapours before thee, over the blasted host. But pleasant is thy beam to the hunter, sitting by the rock in a storm, when thou lookest from thy parted cloud, and brightenest his dewy locks; he looks down on the streamy vale, and beholds the descent of roes. How long shalt thou rise on war, and roll, a bloody shield, through heaven? I see the deaths of heroes dark-wandering over thy face!"

"Why wander the words of Carril? Does the son of heaven mourn? He is unstained in his course, ever rejoicing in his fire.- Roll on, thou careless light; thou too, perhaps, must fall. Thy dun robe[k] may seize thee, struggling, in thy sky.

"Pleasant is the voice of the song, O Carril, to Ossian's soul! It is like the shower of the morning, when it comes through the rustling vale, on which the sun looks through mist, just rising from his rocks. But this is no time, O bard! to sit down at the strife of song.

[i] The morning of the second day, from the opening of the poem, comes on. After the death of Cuthullin, Carril the son of Kinfena, his bard, retired to the cave of Tura, which was in the neighbourhood of Moi-lena, the scene of the poem of Temora. His casual appearance here enables Ossian to fulfil immediately the promise he had made to Cathmor, of causing the funeral song to be pronounced over the tomb of Cairbar. This book only takes up the space of a few hours.

[k] By the dun robe of the sun, is probably meant an eclipse.

Fingal is in arms on the vale. Thou seest the flaming shield of the king. His face darkens between his locks. He beholds the wide rolling of Erin.

" Does not Carril behold that tomb, beside the roaring stream? Three stones lift their grey heads beneath a bending oak. A king is lowly laid; give thou his soul to the wind. He is the brother of Cathmor! Open his airy hall! Let thy song be a stream of joy to Cairbar's darkened ghost."

TEMORA.

The Argument.

Morning coming on, Fingal, after a speech to his people, devolves the command on Gaul, the son of Morni, it being the custom of the times, that the king should not engage, till the necessity of affairs required his superior valour and conduct. The king and Ossian retire to the rock of Cormul, which overlooked the field of battle. The bards sing the war-song. The general conflict is described. Gaul, the son of Morni, distinguishes himself; kills Tur-lathon, chief of Moruth, and other chiefs of lesser name. On the other hand, Foldath, who commanded the Irish army, for Cathmor, after the example of Fingal, kept himself from battle, fights gallantly: kills Connal, chief of Dun-lora, and advances to engage Gaul himself. Gaul, in the mean time, being wounded in the hand, by a random arrow, is covered by Fillan, the son of Fingal, who performs prodigies of valour. Night comes on. The son of Fingal recals his army. The bards meet them, with a congratulatory song, in which the praises of Gaul and Fillan are particularly celebrated. The chiefs sit down to feast; Fingal misses Connal. The episode of Connal and Duth-caron is introduced; which throws further light on the ancient history of Ireland. Carril is dispatched to raise the tomb of Connal. The action of this book takes up the second day, from the opening of the poem.

BOOK III.

Who is that, at blue-streaming Lubar; by the bending hill of the roes? Tall, he leans on an oak torn from high, by nightly winds. Who but Comhal's son, brightening in the last of his fields? His grey hair is on the breeze: he half unsheathes the sword of Luno. His eyes are turned to Moi-lena, to the dark-rolling of foes. Dost thou hear the voice of the king? It is like the burning of a stream in the desart, when it comes between its echoing rocks, to the blasted field of the sun.

"Wide-skirted comes down the foe! Sons of woody Morven, arise. Be ye like the rocks of my land, on whose brown sides are the rolling of waters. A beam of joy comes on my soul; I see them mighty before me. It is when the foe is feeble, that the sighs of Fingal are heard; lest death should come without renown, and darkness dwell on his tomb. Who shall lead the war, against the host of Alnecma? It is only when danger grows, that my sword shall shine. Such was the custom, heretofore, of Trenmor the ruler of winds:

and thus descended to battle the blue-shielded Trathal."

The chiefs bend towards the king: each darkly seems to claim the war. They tell, by halves, their mighty deeds: and turn their eyes on Erin. But far before the rest the son of Morni stood; silent he stood, for who had not heard of the battles of Gaul? They rose within his soul. His hand, in secret, seized the sword. The sword which he brought from Strumon, when the strength of Morni failed [l].

On his spear stood the son of Clatho [m] in the wandering of his locks. Thrice he raised his eyes to Fingal: his voice thrice failed him, as he spoke. Fillan could not boast of battles; at once he strode away. Bent over a distant stream he stood: the tear hung in his eye. He struck, at times, the thistle's head, with his inverted spear.

Nor is he unseen of Fingal. Sidelong he beheld his son. He beheld him, with bursting joy; and turned, amidst his crowded soul. In silence turned the king

[l] Strumon, 'stream of the hill' the name of the seat of the family of Gaul, in the neighbourhood of Selma. During Gaul's expedition to Tromathon, mentioned in the poem of Oithona, Morni his father died. Morni ordered the sword of Strumon, which had been preserved in the family, as a re e, (from the days of Colgach, the most renowned of his ancestors) to be laid by his e, in the tomb: at the same time leaving it in charge to his son, not to take it from thence, till he was reduced to the last extremity. Not long after, two of his brothers being slain, in battle, by Coldaronnan, chief of Clutha, Gaul went to his father's tomb to take the sword. His address to the spirit of the deceased hero, is the only part now remaining of a poem of Ossian's on the subject. I shall here lay it before the reader

Gaul. "Breaker of echoing shields, whose head is deep in shades; hear me from the darkness of Clora. O son of Colgach hear!

No rustling, like the eagle's wing, comes over the course of my streams. Deep-bosomed in the midst of the desart, O king of Strumon, hear!

Dwellest thou in the shadowy breeze, that pours its dark wave over the grass? Cease to strew the beard of the thistle; O chief of Clora, hear!

Or ridest thou on a beam, amidst the dark of clouds? Pourest thou the loud wind on the seas, to roll their blue waves over isles? hear me, father of Gaul; amidst thy terrors, hear!

The rustling of eagles is heard, the murmuring oaks shake their heads on the hills; dreadful and pleasant is thy approach, friend of the dwelling heroes.

Morni. Who awakes me in the midst of my clouds, where my locks of mist spread on the winds? Mixed with the noise of streams, why rises the voice of Gaul?

Gaul. My foes are around me, Morni; their dark ships descend from their waves. Give the sword of Strumon, that beam which thou hidest in thy night.

Morni. Take the sword of resounding Strumon; I look on thy war, my son; I look, a dim meteor, from my cloud; blue-shielded Gaul, destroy."

[m] Clatho was the daughter of Cathulla, king of Inistore. Fingal, in one of his expeditions to that island, fell in love with Clatho, and took her to wife, after the death of Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac, king of Ireland.

Clatho was the mother of Ryno, Fillan, and Bosmina, mentioned in the battle of Lora. Fillan is often called the son of Clatho, to distinguish him from those sons which Fingal had by Ros-crana,

towards Mora of woods. He hid the big tear with his locks. At length his voice is heard.

"First of the sons of Morni; thou rock that defiest the storm! Lead thou my battle, for the race of low-laid Cormac. No boy's staff is thy spear: no harmless beam of light thy sword. Son of Morni of steeds, behold the foe; destroy. Fillan, observe the chief: he is not calm in strife: nor burns he, heedless, in battle; my son, observe the king. He is strong as Lubar's stream, but never foams and roars. High on cloudy Mora, Fingal shall behold the war. Stand, Ossian[n], near thy father, by the falling stream. Raise the voice, O bards! Morven, move beneath the sound. It is my latter field; clothe it over with light."

As the sudden rising of winds, or distant rolling of troubled seas, when some dark ghost, in wrath, heaves the billows over an isle, the seat of mist, on the deep, for many dark-brown years: so terrible is the sound of the host, wide-moving over the field. Gaul is tall before them: the streams glitter within his strides. The bards raised the song by his side; he struck his shield between. On the skirts of the blast the tuneful voices arose.

"On Crona," said the bards, "there bursts a stream by night. It swells in its own dark course, till morning's early beam. Then comes it white from the hill, with the rocks and their hundred groves. Far be my steps from Crona: death is tumbling there. Be ye a stream from Mora, sons of cloudy Morven."

"Who rises, from his car, on Clutha? The hills are troubled before the king! The dark woods echo round, and lighten at his steel. See him, amidst the foe, like Colgach's[o] sportful ghost; when he scatters the clouds,

n Ullin being sent to Morven with the body of Oscar, Ossian attends his father in quality of chief bard.

o There are some traditions, but, I believe, of late invention, that this Colgach was the same with the Galgacus of Tacitus. He was the ancestor of Ganl, the son of Morni, and appears, from some really ancient traditions, to have been king, or Vergobret, of the Caledonians; and hence proceeded the pretensions of the family of Morni to the throne, which created a good deal of disturbance, both to Comhal and his son Fingal. The first was killed in battle by that tribe, and it was after Fingal was grown up, that they were reduced to obedience. Colgach signifies 'fiercely looking;' which is a very proper name for a warrior, and is probably the origin of Galgacus; though I believe it is a matter of mere conjecture, that the Colgach here mentioned was the same with that hero. I cannot help observing, with how much propriety the song of the bards is con-

and rides the eddying wings! It is Morni[p] of the bounding steeds! Be like thy father, Gaul."

"Selma is opened wide. Bards take the trembling harps. Ten youths carry the oak of the feast. A distant sun-beam marks the hill. The dusky waves of the blast fly over the fields of grass. Why art thou so silent, Morven? The king returns with all his fame. Did not the battle roar; yet peaceful is his brow? It roared, and Fingal overcame. Be like thy father, Fillan."

They moved beneath the song. High waved their arms, as rushy fields beneath autumnal winds. On Mora stood the king in arms. Mist flies round his buckler broad, as aloft it hung on a bough, on Cormul's mossy rock. In silence I stood by Fingal, and turned my eyes on Cromla's[q] wood: lest I should behold the host, and rush amidst my swelling soul. My foot is forward on the heath. I glittered, tall, in steel: like the falling stream of Tromo, which nightly winds bind over with ice. The boy sees it, on high, gleaming to the early beam: towards it he turns his ear, and wonders why it is so silent.

Nor bent over a stream is Cathmor, like a youth in a peaceful field: wide he drew forward the war, a dark and troubled wave. But when he beheld Fingal on Mora, his generous pride arose. "Shall the chief of Atha fight, and no king in the field? Foldath, lead my people forth. Thou art a beam of fire."

Forth issued the chief of Moma, like a cloud, the robe of ghosts. He drew his sword, a flame from his side; and bade the battle move. The tribes, like ridgy waves, dark pour their strength around. Haughty in his stride before them: his red eye rolls in wrath. He called the chief of Dunratho[r]; and his words were heard.

ducted. Caul, whose experience might have rendered his conduct cautious in war, has the example of his father, just rushing to battle, set before his eyes. Fillan, on the other hand whose youth might make him impetuous and unguarded in action, is put in mind of the sedate and serene behaviour of Fingal upon like occasions.

p The expedition of Morni to Clutha, alluded to, is handed down in tradition.

q The mountain Cromla was in the neighbourhood of the scene of this poem; which was nearly the same with that of Fingal.

r Dun-ratho, 'a hill with a plain on its top.' Cormuil, 'blue eye.' Foldath dispatches, here, Cormul to lie in ambush behind the army of the Caledonians. This speech

"Cormul, thou beholdest that path. It winds green behind the foe. Place thy people there; lest Morven should escape from my sword. Bards of green-valleyed Erin, let no voice of yours arise. The sons of Morven must fall without song. They are the foes of Cairbar. Hereafter shall the traveller meet their dark, thick mist on Lena, where it wanders, with their ghosts, beside the reedy lake. Never shall they rise, without song, to the dwelling of winds."

Cormul darkened as he went: behind him rushed his tribe. They sunk beyond the rock: Gaul spoke to Fillan of Moruth; as his eye pursued the course of the dark-eyed king of Dunratho. "Thou beholdest the steps of Cormul; let thine arm be strong. When he is low, son of Fingal, remember Gaul in war. Here I fall forward into battle, amidst the ridge of shields."

The sign of death arose: the dreadful sound of Morni's shield. Gaul poured his voice between. Fingal rose, high on Mora. He saw them, from wing to wing, bending in the strife. Gleaming, on his own dark-hill, the strength of Atha stood. They were like two spirits of heaven, standing each on his gloomy cloud; when they pour abroad the winds, and lift the roaring seas. The blue-tumbling of waves is before them, marked with the paths of whales. Themselves are calm and bright; and the gale lifts their locks of mist.

What beam of light hangs high in air? It is Morni's dreadful sword. Death is strewed on thy paths, O Gaul; thou foldest them together in thy rage. Like a young oak falls Turlathon [s], with his branches round him. His high-bosomed spouse stretches her white arms, in dreams, to the returning king, as she sleeps by gurgling Moruth, in her disordered locks. It is

suits well with the character of Foldath, which is, throughout, haughty and presumptuous. Towards the latter end of his speech, we find the opinion of the times, concerning the unhappiness of the souls of those who were buried without the funeral song. This doctrine, no doubt, was inculcated by the bards to make their order more respectable and necessary.

[s] Tur-lathon, 'broad trunk of a tree.' Moruth, 'great stream.' Oichamo, 'mild maid.' Dun-lora, 'the hill of the noisy stream.' Duth-caron, 'dark-brown man.'

his ghost, Oichoma; the chief is lowly laid. Hearken not to the winds for Turlathon's echoing shield. It is pierced, by his streams, and its sound is passed away.

Not peaceful is the hand of Foldath: he winds his course in blood. Connal met him in fight; they mixed their clanging steel. Why should mine eyes behold them? Connal, thy locks are grey. Thou wert the friend of strangers, at the moss-covered rock of Dunlora. When the skies were rolled together; then thy feast was spread. The stranger heard the winds without; and rejoiced at thy burning oak. Why, son of Duth-caron, art thou laid in blood? The blasted tree bends above thee: thy shield lies broken near. Thy blood mixes with the stream; thou breaker of the shields!

I took the spear, in my wrath; but Gaul rushed forward on the foe. The feeble pass by his side; his rage is turned on Moma's chief. Now they had raised their deathful spears: unseen an arrow came. It pierced he hand of Gaul; his steel fell sounding to earth. Young Fillan came[t], with Cormul's shield, and stretched it large before the king. Foldath sent his shout abroad, and kindled all the field: as a blast that lifts the broad-winged flame, over Lumon's[u] echoing groves.

"Son of blue-eyed Clatho," said Gaul, "thou art a beam from heaven; that coming on the troubled deep, binds up the tempest's wing. Cormul is fallen before thee. Early art thou in the fame of thy fathers. Rush not too far, my hero, I cannot lift the spear to aid. I stand harmless in battle: but my voice shall be poured abroad. The sons of Morven shall hear, and remember my former deeds."

His terrible voice rose on the wind, the host bend forward in the fight. Often had they heard him at Strumon, when he called them to the chase of the hinds. Himself stood tall, amidst the war, as an oak

t Fillan had been dispatched by Gaul to oppose Cormul, who had been sent by Foldath to lie in ambush behind the Caledonian army. It appears that Fillan had killed Cormul, otherwise he could not be supposed to have possessed himself of the shield of that chief.

u Lumon, 'bending hill; a mountain in Inis-huna, or that part of South Britain, which lies over against the Irish coast.

in the skirts of a storm, which now is clothed, on high, in mist: then shows its broad, waving head; the musing hunter lifts his eye from his own rushy field.

My soul pursues thee, O Fillan, through the path of thy fame. Thou rollest the foe before thee. Now Foldath, perhaps, would fly; but night came down with its clouds; and Cathmor's horn was heard. The sons of Morven heard the voice of Fingal, from Mora's gathered mist. The bards poured their song, like dew, on the returning war.

"Who comes from Strumon," they said, "amidst her wandering locks? She is mournful in her steps, and lifts her blue eyes towards Erin. Why art thou sad, Evir-choma[v]? Who is like thy chief in renown? He descended dreadful to battle: he returns like a light from a cloud. He lifted the sword in wrath: they shrunk before blue-shielded Gaul!

"Joy, like the rustling gale, comes on the soul of the king. He remembers the battles of old; the days wherein his fathers fought. The days of old return on Fingal's mind, as he beholds the renown of his son. As the sun rejoices from his cloud, over the tree his beams have raised, as it shakes his lonely head on the heath; so joyful is the king over Fillan.

"As the rolling of thunder on hills, when Lara's fields are still and dark, such are the steps of Morven, pleasant and dreadful to the ear. They return with their sound, like eagles to their dark-browed rock, after the prey is torn on the field, the dun sons of the bounding hind. Your fathers rejoice from their clouds, sons of streamy Cona."

Such was the nightly voice of bards, on Mora of the hinds. A flame rose, from an hundred oaks, which winds had torn from Cormul's steep. The feast is spread in the midst: around sat the gleaming chiefs. Fingal is there in his strength; the eagle-wing[w] of his

[v] Evir-choama, 'mild and stately maid,' the wife of Gaul. She was the daughter of Casdu-conglas, chief of I-dronlo, one of the Hebrides.

[w] The kings of Morven and Ireland had a plume of eagle's feathers, by way of ornament, in their helmets. It was from this distinguishing mark that Ossian knew Cathmor, in the second book.

helmet sounds: the rustling blasts of the west, unequal rushed through night: Long looked the king in silence, round: at length his words were heard.

"My soul feels a want in our joy. I behold a breach among my friends. The head of one tree is low: the squally wind pours in on Selma. Where is the chief of Dun-lora? Ought he to be forgot at the feast? When did he forget the stranger, in the midst of his echoing hall? Ye are silent in my presence! Connal is then no more. Joy meet thee, O warrior, like a stream of light. Swift be thy course to thy fathers, in the folds of the mountain-winds. Ossian, thy soul is fire; kindle the memory of the king. Awake the battles of Connal, when first he shone in war. The locks of Connal were grey; his days of youth* were mixed with mine. In one day Duth-caron first strung our bows against the roes of Dun-lora."

"Many," I said, "are our paths to battle, in green-hilled Inis-fail. Often did our sails arise, over the blue-tumbling waters; when we came, in other days to aid the race of Conar. The strife roared once in Alnecma, at the foam-covered streams of Duth-ula[y]. With Cormac descended to battle Duth-caron from cloudy Morven. Nor descended Duth-caron alone; his son was by his side, the long-haired youth of Connal lifting the first of his spears. Thou didst command them, O Fingal, to aid the king of Erin.

"Like the bursting strength of a stream, the sons of Bolga rushed to war: Colc-ulla[z] was before them the chief of blue-streaming Atha. The battle was mixed on the plain, like the meeting of two stormy seas. Cormac[a] shone in his own strife, bright as the

* After the death of Comhal, and during the usurpation of the tribe of Morni, Fingal was educated in private by Duth-caron, which occassions his regretting so much his fall. When Fingal was grown up, he soon reduced the tribe of Morni; and, as it appears from the subsequent episode, sent Duth-caron and his son Connal to the aid of Cormac, the son of Conar, king of Ireland, who was driven to the last extremity, by the insurrections of the Firbolg. This episode throws further light on the contests between the Caël and Firbolg; and is the more valuable upon that account.

y Duth-ula, a river in Connaught; it signifies, 'dark rushing water.'

z Colc-ulla, 'firm look in readiness;' he was the brother of Borbar-duthul, the father of Cairbar and Cathmor, who, after the death of Cormac the son of Artho, successively mounted the Irish throne.

a Cormac, the son of Conar, the second king of Ireland, of the race of the Caledonians. This insurrection of the Firbolg happened towards the latter end of the long reig

forms of his fathers. But far before the rest, Duth-caron hewed down the foe. Nor slept the arm of Connal, by his father's side. Atha prevailed on the plain: like scattered mist fled the people of Ullin[b].

"Then rose the sword of Duth-caron, and the steel of broad-shielded Connal. They shaded their flying friends, like two rocks with their heads of pine. Night came down on Duth-ula; silent strode the chiefs over the field. A mountain stream roared across the path, nor could Duth-caron bound over its course. "Why stands my father?" said Connal, "I hear the rushing foe."

"Fly Connal," he said; "thy father's strength begins to fail. I come wounded from battle; here let me rest in night." "But thou shall not remain alone," said Connal's bursting sigh. "My shield is an eagle's wing to cover the king of Dun-lora." He bends dark above the chief: the mighty Duth-caron dies.

"Day rose, and night returned. No lonely bard appeared, deep musing on the heath: and could Connal leave the tomb of his father, till he should receive his fame? He bent the bow against the roes of Duth-ula; he spread the lonely feast. Seven nights he laid his head on the tomb, and saw his father in his dreams. He saw him rolled dark, in a blast, like the vapour of reedy Lego.—At length, the steps of Colgan[c] came,

of Cormac. From several episodes and poems it appears, that he never possessed the Irish throne peaceably. The party of the family of Atha, had made several attempts to overturn the succession in the race of Conar, before they effected it in the minority of Cormac, the son of Artho. Ireland, from the most ancient accounts concerning it seems to have been always so disturbed by domestic commotions, that it is difficult to say, whether it ever was, for any length of time, subject to one monarch. It is certain, that every province, if not every small district, had its own king. One of those petty princes assumed, at times, the title of King of Ireland, and, on account of his superior force, or in case of public danger, was acknowledged by the rest as such; but the succession from father to son, does not appear to have been established. It was the division amongst themselves, arising from the bad constitution of their government, that, at last, subjected the Irish to a foreign yoke.

b The inhabitants of Ullin, or Ulster, who were of the race of the Caledonians, seem, alone to have been the firm friends to the succession in the family of Conar. The Firbolg were only subject to them by constraint, and embraced every opportunity to throw their yoke.

c Colgan, the son of Cathmul, was the principal bard of Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland. Part of an old poem, on the loves of Fingal and Ros-crana, is still preserved, and goes under the name of this Colgan; but whether it is of his composition, or the production of a later age, I shall not pretend to determine. Be that as it will, it appears, from the obsolete phrases which it contains, to be very ancient: and its poetical merit may perhaps excuse me for laying a translation of it before the reader. What

the bard of high Temora. Duth-caron received hi fame, and brightened, as he rose on the wind."

"Pleasant to the ear," said Fingal, "is the prais of the kings of men; when their bows are strong i battle; when they soften at the sight of the sad. Thu let my name be renowned, when bards shall lighte my rising soul. Carril, son of Kin-fena; take th bards and raise a tomb. To-night let Connal dwel within his narrow house: let not the soul of the va liant wander on the winds. Faint glimmers the moo on Moi-lena, through the broad-headed groves of th hill; raise stones, beneath its beams, to all the falle in war. Though no chiefs were they, yet their hand were strong in fight. They were my rock in danger the mountain from which I spread my eagle wing thence am I renowned: Carril forget not the low."

Loud at once, from the hundred bards, rose the son of the tomb. Carril strode before them; they are th murmur of streams behind him. Silence dwells in th vales of Moi-lena, where each, with its own dar stream, is winding between the hills. I heard th voice of the bards, lessening as they moved along. leaned forward from my shield; and felt the kindlin of my soul. Half-formed, the words of my song, burs forth upon the wind. So hears a tree, on the vale, th voice of spring around: it pours its green leaves to th

remains of this poem is a dialogue in a lyric measure, between Fingal and Ros-cran the daughter of Cormac. She begins with a soliloquy, which is overheard by Fingal.

Ros-crana. "By night came a dream to Ros-crana! I feel my beating soul. N vision of the forms of the dead, came to the blue eyes of Erin But, rising from th wave of the north, I beheld him bright in his locks. I beheld the son of the king. M beating soul is high. I laid my head down in night: again ascended the form. Wh delayest thou thy coming, young rider of the streamy waves?

But, there, far distant he comes; where seas roll their green ridges in mist! Youn dweller of my soul, why dost thou delay?

Fingal. It was the soft voice of Moi-lena! the pleasant breeze of the valley of roes But why dost thou hide thee in shades? Young love of heroes, rise. Are not thy step covered with light? In thy groves thou appearest, Ros-crana, like the sun in the ga thering of clouds. Why dost thou hide thee in shades? Young love of heroes, rise.

Ros-crana. My fluttering soul is high! Let me turn from the steps of the king H has heard my secret voice, and shall my blue eyes roll, in his presence! Roe of th hill of moss, toward thy dwelling I move. Meet me, ye breezes of Mora, as I mov through the valley of winds. But why should he ascend his ocean? Son of heroes, m soul is thine! My steps shall not move to the desart: the light of Ros-crana is here.

Fingal. It was the light tread of a ghost, the fair dweller of eddying-winds. Wh deceivest thou me, with thy voice? Here let me rest in shades. Shouldst thou stretc thy white arm, from thy grove, thou sun-beam of Cormac of Erin?

Ros-crana. He is gone! and my blue eyes are dim: faint-rolling, in all my tear But, there, I behold him, alone; king of Morven, my soul is thine. Ah me! wha clanging armour! Culc-ulla of Atha is near!"

un, and shakes its lonely head. The hum of the mountain-bee is near it; the hunter sees it, with joy, rom the blasted heath.

Young Fillan at a distance stood. His helmet lay littering on the ground. His dark hair is loose to the last: a beam of light is Clatho's son. He heard the words of the king with joy; and leaned forward on is spear.

"My son," said car-borne Fingal; "I saw thy eeds, and my soul was glad. The fame of our fa-hers, I said, bursts from its gathered cloud. Thou rt brave, son of Clatha; but headlong in the strife. So did not Fingal advance, though he never feared foe. Let thy people be a ridge behind; they are hy strength in the field. Then shalt thou be long re-owned, and behold the tombs of thy fathers. The hemory of the past returns, my deeds in other years: vhen first I descended from ocean on the green-val-eyed isle." We bend towards the voice of the king. The moon looks abroad from her cloud. The grey-kirted mist is near the dwelling of the ghosts.

TEMORA.

The Argument.

The second night continues. Fingal relates, at the feast, his own first expedition into Ireland, and his marriage with Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac, king of that island. The Irish chiefs convene in the presence of Cathmor. The situation of the king described. The story of Sul-malla, the daughter of Con-mor, king of Inis-huna, who, in the disguise of a young warrior, had followed Cathmor to the war. The sullen behaviour of Foldath, who had commanded in the battle of the preceding day, renews the difference between him and Malthos; but Cathmor interposing, ends it. The chiefs feast, and hear the song of Fonar the bard. Cathmor retires to rest, at a distance from the army. The ghost of his brother Cairbar appears to him in a dream, and obscurely foretels the issue of the war. The soliloquy of the king. He discovers Sul-malla. Morning comes. Her soliloquy closes the book.

BOOK IV.

"BENEATH[d] an oak," said the king, "I sat on Selma's streamy rock, when Connal rose, from the sea with the broken spear of Duth-caron. Far distant stood the youth, and turned away his eyes; for he remembered the steps of his father, on his own green hills. I darkened in my place: dusky thoughts rolled over my soul. The kings of Erin rose before me. I half unsheathed my sword. Slowly approached the chiefs: they lifted up their silent eyes. Like a ridge of clouds they wait for the bursting forth of my voice: it was to them a wind from heaven to roll the mist away.

"I bad my white sails to rise, before the roar of Cona's wind. Three hundred youths looked, from their waves, on Fingal's bossy shield. High on the mast it hung, and marked the dark-blue sea. But when the night came down, I struck, at times, the warning boss. I struck, and looked on high, for fiery-haired Ul-erin[e]. Nor wanting was the star of heaven: it travelled re-

d This episode has an immediate connection with the story of Connal and Duth-caron in the latter end of the third book. Fingal, sitting beneath an oak, near the palace of Selma, discovers Connal just landing from Ireland. The danger which threatened Cormac, king of Ireland, induces him to sail immediately to that island. The story is introduced, by the king, as a pattern for the future behaviour of Fillan, whose rashness in the preceding battle is reprimanded.

e Ul-erin, 'the guide to Ireland,' a star known by that name in the days of Fingal, and very useful to those who sailed, by night, from the Hebrides, or Caledonia, to the coast of Ulster.

between the clouds: I pursued the lovely beam, on the faint-gleaming deep. With morning, Erin rose in mist. We came into the bay of Moi-lena, where its blue waters tumbled, in the bosom of echoing woods. Here Cormac, in his secret hall, avoided the strength of Colc-ulla. Nor he alone avoids the foe: the blue eye of Ros-crana is there: Ros-crana[f] white-handed maid, the daughter of the king.

"Grey, on his pointless spear, came forth the aged steps of Cormac. He smiled, from his waving locks, but grief was in his soul. He saw us few before him, and his sigh arose. "I see the arms of Trenmor," he said; "and these are the steps of the king! Fingal! thou art a beam of light to Cormac's darkened soul. Early is thy fame, my son: but strong are the foes of Erin. They are like the roar of streams in the land, son of car-borne Comhal."

"Yet they may be rolled[g] away," I said, in my rising soul. "We are not of the race of the feeble, king of blue-shielded hosts. Why should fear come amongst us, like a ghost of night? The soul of the valiant grows, as foes increase in the field. Roll no darkness, king of Erin, on the young in war."

"The bursting tears of the king came down. He seized my hand in silence. "Race of the daring Trenmor, I roll no cloud before thee. Thou burnest in the fire of thy fathers. I behold thy fame. It marks thy course in battles, like a stream of light. But wait the coming of Cairbar[b]: my son must join thy sword. He calls the sons of Ullin, from all their distant streams."

f Ros-crana, 'the beam of the rising sun;' she was the mother of Ossian. The Irish bards relate strange fictions of this princess. Their stories, however, concerning Fingal, if they mean by him Fion Mac-comhal, are so inconsistent, and notoriously fabulous, that they do not deserve to be mentioned; for they evidently bear along with them the marks of late invention.

g Cormac had said that his foes were "like the roar of streams," and Fingal continues the metaphor. The speech of the young hero is spirited, and consistent with that sedate intrepidity, which eminently distinguishes his character throughout.

b Cairbar, the son of Cormac, was afterwards king of Ireland. His reign was short. He was succeeded by his son Artho, the father of that Cormac who was murdered by Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul. Cairbar, the son of Cormac, long after his son Artho was grown to man's estate, had, by his wife Beltanno, another son, whose name was Ferard-artho. He was the only one remaining of the race of Conar the first king of Ireland, when Fingal's expedition against Cairbar the son of Borbar-duthul happened. See more of Ferard-artho in the eighth book.

We came to the hall of the king, where it rose in the midst of rocks: rocks, on whose dark sides were the mark of streams of old. Broad oaks bend around with their moss: the thick birch waves its green head. Half-hid, in her shady grove, Ros-crano raised the song. Her white hands rose on the harp. I beheld her blue-rolling eyes. She was like a spirit[i] of heaven half-folded in the skirt of a cloud.

"Three days we feasted at Moi-lena; she rose bright amidst my troubled soul. Cormac beheld me dark. He gave the white-bosomed maid. She came with bending eye, amidst the wandering of her heavy locks. She came. Straight the battle roared. Colc-ulla rushed; I seized my spear. My sword rose, with my people, against the ridgy foe. Alnecma fled. Colc-ulla fell. Fingal returned with fame.

"He is renowned, O Fillan, who fights, in the strength of his people, The bard pursues his steps, through the land of the foe. But he who fights alone, few are his deeds to other times. He shines to-day a mighty light. To-morrow, he is low. One song contains his fame. His name is on one dark field. He is forgot, but where his tomb sends forth the tufts of grass."

Such were the words of Fingal, on Mora of the roes. Three bards, from the rock of Cormul, poured down the pleasant song. Sleep descended, in the sound, on

i The attitude of Ros-crana is aptly illustrated by this simile; for the ideas of those times concerning the spirits of the deceased, were not so gloomy and disagreeable as those of succeeding ages. The spirits of women, it was supposed, retained that beauty which they possessed while living, and transported themselves, from place to place with that gliding motion, which Homer ascribes to the gods. The descriptions which poets, less ancient than Ossian, have left us of those beautiful figures, that appeared sometimes on the hills, are elegant and picturesque. They compare them to the 'rain bow on streams;' or the 'gliding of sun-beams on the hills'

A chief who lived three centuries ago, returning from the war, understood that his wife or mistress was dead. The bard introduces him speaking the following soliloquy when he came within sight of the place where he had left her, at his departure.

"My soul darkens in sorrow. I behold not the smoke of my hall. No grey dog bounds at my streams. Silence dwells in the valley of trees.

"Is that a rain-bow on Crunath? It flies: and the sky is dark. Again, thou movest bright on the heath, thou sun-beam clothed in a shower! Ha! is it she, my love: he gliding course on the bosom of winds!"

In succeeding times the beauty of Ros-crana passed into a proverb, and the highest compliment that could be paid to a woman, was to compare her person with the daughter of Cormac.

'S tu fein an Ros-crana.
Siol Chormacc na n'ioma lan.

the broad-skirted host. Carril returned, with the bards, from the tomb of Dun-lora's king. The voice of morning shall not come, to the dusky bed of the hero. No more shalt thou hear the tread of roes, around thy narrow house.

As roll the troubled clouds, round a meteor of night, when they brighten their sides with its light, along the heaving sea: so gathered Erin, around the gleaming form of Atha's king. He, tall in the midst, careless lifts, at times, his spear: as swells or falls the sound of Fonar's distant harp. Near[k] him leaned, against a rock, Sul-malla[l] of blue eyes, the white-bosomed daughter of Con-mor, king of Inis-huna. To his aid came blue-shielded Cathmor, and rolled his foes away. Sul-malla beheld him stately in the hall of feasts; nor careless rolled the eyes of Cathmor on the long-haired maid.

The third day arose, and Fithil[m] came from Erin of the streams. He told of the lifting up of the shield[n]

k In order to illustrate this passage, I shall give, here, the history on which it is founded, as I have gathered it from other poems. The nation of the Firbolg, who inhabited the South of Ireland, being originally descended from the Belgæ, who possessed the south and south-west coast of Britain, kept up, for many ages, an amicable correspondence with their mother country; and sent aid to the British Belgæ, when they were pressed by the Romans or other new comers from the continent. Con-mor king of Inis-huna, (that part of South Britain which is over against the Irish coast) being attacked, by what enemy is not mentioned, sent for aid to Cairbar, lord of Atha, the most potent chief of the Firbolg. Cairbar dispatched his brother Cathmor to the assistance of Con-mor. Cathmor, after various vicissitudes of fortune, put an end to the war, by the total defeat of the enemies of Inis-huna, and returned in triumph to the residence of Con-mor. There, at a feast, Sul-malla, the daughter of Con-mor, fell desperately in love with Cathmor, who, before her passion was disclosed, was recalled to Ireland, by his brother Cairbar, upon the news of the intended expedition of Fingal, to re-establish the family of Conar on the Irish throne. The wind being contrary, Cathmor remained, for three days, in a neighbouring bay, during which time, Sul-malla disguised herself in the habit of a young warrior, and came to offer him her service in the war. Cathmor accepted of the proposal, sailed to Ireland, and arrived in Ulster a few days before the death of Cairbar.

l Sul-malla, 'slowly rolling eyes.' Caon-mor, 'mild and tall.' Inis-huna, 'green-island.'

m Fithil, 'an inferior bard.' It may either be taken here for the proper name of a man, or in the literal sense, as the bards were the heralds and messengers of those times. Cathmor, it is probable, was absent, when the rebellion of his brother Cairbar, and the assassination of Cormac king of Ireland happened. The traditions, which are handed down with the poem, say that Cathmor and his followers had only arrived from Inis-huna, three days before the death of Cairbar, which sufficiently clears his character from any imputation of being concerned in the conspiracy with his brother

n The ceremony which was used by Fingal, when he prepared for an expedition, is related by Ossian in one of his lesser poems. A bard, at midnight, went to the hall, where the tribes feasted upon solemn occasions, raised the war song, and thrice called the spirits of their deceased ancestors, to come, on their clouds, and behold the actions of their children. He then fixed the shield of Trenmor, on a tree on the rock of Selma, striking it, at times, with the blunt end of a spear, and singing the war song between. Thus he did, for three successive nights, and in the mean time, messengers were dispatched to convene the tribes; or, as Ossian expresses it, 'to call them from all their streams.' This phrase alludes to the situation of the residence of the clans,

on Morven, and the danger of red-haired Cairbar. Cathmor raised the sail at Cluba; but the winds were in other lands. Three days he remained on the coast, and turned his eyes on Con-mor's halls. He remembered the daughter of strangers, and his sigh arose. Now when the winds awaked the wave; from the hill came a youth in arms, to lift the sword with Cathmor in his echoing field. It was the white-armed Sul-malla: secret she dwelt beneath her helmet. Her steps were in the path of the king; on him her blue eyes rolled with joy, when he lay by his roaring streams. But Cathmor thought, that on Lumon, she still pursued the roe: or fair on a rock, stretched her white hand to the wind; to feel its course from Inis-fail the green dwelling of her love. He had promised to return, with his white-bosomed sails. The maid is near thee, king of Atha, leaning on her rock.

The tall forms of the chiefs stood around: all but dark-browed Foldath[o]. He stood beneath a distant tree, rolled into his haughty soul. His bushy hair whistles in wind. At times, bursts the hum of a song. He struck the tree, at length, in wrath; and rushed before the king. Calm and stately, to the beam of the oak, arose the form of young Hidalla. His hair falls round his blushing cheek, in wreaths of waving light. Soft was his voice in Clon-ra[p], in the valley of his fathers; when he touched the harp, in the hall, near his roaring streams.

"King of Erin," said the youth, "now is the time of feasts. Bid the voice of bards arise, and roll the night away. The soul returns, from song, more terrible to war. Darkness settles on Inis-fail: from hill to hill bend the skirted clouds. Far and grey, on the

which were generally fixed in valleys, where the torrents of the neighbouring mountains were collected into one body, and became large streams or rivers. The lifting up of the shield, was the phrase for beginning a war.

o The surly attitude of Foldath is a proper preamble to his after behaviour. Chaffed with the disappointment of the victory which he promised himself, he becomes passionate and overbearing. The quarrel which succeeds between him and Malthos, was, no doubt, introduced by the poet, to raise the character of Cathmor, whose superior worth shines forth, in his manly manner of ending the difference between the chiefs.

p Claon-rath, 'winding field.' The *th* are seldom pronounced audibly in the Gaelic language.

heath, the dreadful strides of ghosts are seen: the ghosts of those who fell, bend forward to their song. Bid thou the harps to rise, and brighten the dead on their wandering blasts."

"Be all the dead forgot," said Foldath's bursting wrath. "Did not I fall in the field, and shall I hear the song? Yet was not my course harmless in battle: blood was a stream round my steps. But the feeble were behind me, and the foe has escaped my sword."

In Clon-ra's vale touch thou the harp; let Dura answer to thy voice; while some maid looks, from the wood, on thy long yellow locks. Fly from Lubar's echoing plain; it is the field of heroes."

"King of Temora[q]," Malthos said, "it is thine to lead in war. Thou art a fire to our eyes on the dark-brown field. Like a blast thou hast passed over hosts, and laid them low in blood; but who has heard thy words returning from the field? The wrathful delight in death; their remembrance rests on the wounds of their spear. Strife is folded in their thoughts: their words are ever heard. Thy course, chief of Moma, was like a troubled stream. The dead were rolled on thy path; but others also lift the spear. We were not feeble behind thee, but the foe was strong."

The king beheld the rising rage, and bending forward of either chief: for half-unsheathed they held their swords, and rolled their silent eyes. Now would they have mixed in horrid fray, had not the wrath of Cathmor burned. He drew his sword: it gleamed through night, to the high flaming oak. "Sons of pride," said the king, "allay your swelling souls. Retire in night. Why should my rage arise? Should I contend with both in arms? It is no time for strife. Retire, ye clouds at my feast. Awake my soul no more."

They sunk from the king on either side; like[r] two

[q] This speech of Malthos is, throughout, a severe reprimand to the blustering behaviour of Foldath.

[r] The poet could scarce find, in all nature, a comparison so favourable as this, to the superiority of Cathmor over his two chiefs. I shall illustrate this passage with another from a fragment of an ancient poem, just now in my hands. "As the sun is above

columns of morning mist, when the sun rises, between them, on his glittering rocks. Dark is their rolling on either side; each towards its reedy pool.

Silent sat the chiefs at the feast. They looked, at times, on Atha's king, where he strode, on his rock, amidst his settling soul. The host lay, at length, on the field: sleep descended on Moi-lena. The voice of Fonar rose alone, beneath his distant tree. It rose in the praise of Cathmor son of Larthon [s] of Lumon. But Cathmor did not hear his praise. He lay at the roar of a stream. The rustling breeze of night flew over his whistling locks.

Cairbar came to his dreams, half seen from his low-hung cloud. Joy rose darkly in his face: he had heard the song of Carril [t]. A blast sustained his dark-skirted cloud; which he seized in the bosom of night, as he rose, with his fame towards his airy halls. Half-mixed with the noise of the stream, he poured his feeble words.

"Joy met the soul of Cathmor: his voice was heard on Moi-lena. The bard gave his song to Cairbar? he travels on the wind. My form is in my father's hall, like the gliding of a terrible light, which winds through the desart, in a stormy night. No bard shall be want-

the vapours, which his beams have raised; so is the soul of the king above the sons of fear. They roll dark below him, he rejoices in the robe of his beams. But when feeble deeds wander on the soul of the king, he is a darkened sun rolled along the sky; the valley is sad below: flowers wither beneath the drops of the night."

s Lear-thon, 'sea wave.' The name of the chief of that colony of the Firbolg, which first migrated into Ireland. Larthon's first settlement in that country, is related in the seventh book. He was the ancestor of Cathmor; and is here called Larthon of Lumon, from a high hill of that name in Inis-huna, the ancient seat of the Firbolg. The poet preserves the character of Cathmor throughout. He had mentioned, in the first book, the aversion of that chief to praise, and we find him here lying at the side of a stream, that the noise of it might drown the voice of Fonar, who, according to the custom of the times, sung his eulogium in his evening song. Though other chiefs, as well as Cathmor, might be averse to hear their own praise, we find it to be the universal policy of the times, to allow the bards to be as extravagant as they pleased in their encomiums on the leaders of armies, in the presence of their people. The vulgar, who had no great ability to judge for themselves, received the character of their princes entirely upon the faith of the bards.

t Carril, the son of Kinfena, by the order of Ossian, sung the funeral elegy at the tomb of Cairbar. See the second book, towards the end. In all the poems of Ossian, the visits of ghosts to their living friends, are short, and their language obscure; both which circumstances tend to throw a solemn gloom on those supernatural scenes. Towards the latter end of the speech of the ghost of Cairbar, he foretels the death of Cathmor, by enumerating those signals which, according to the opinion of the times, preceded the death of a person renowned. It was thought that the ghosts of deceased bards sung, for three nights preceding the death (near the place where his tomb was to be raised), round an unsubstantial figure which represented the body of the person who was to die.

ing at thy tomb, when thou art lowly laid. The sons of song love the valiant. Cathmor, thy name is a pleasant gale. The mournful sounds arise! On Lubar's field there is a voice! Louder still, ye shadowy ghosts! the dead were full of fame. Shrilly swells the feeble sound. The rougher blast alone is heard! Ah, soon is Cathmor low!" Rolled into himself he flew, wide on the bosom of his blast. The old oak felt his departure, and shook its whistling head. The king started from rest, and took his deathful spear. He lifts his eyes around. He sees but dark-skirted night.

"It[u] was the voice of the king; but now his form is gone. Unmarked is your path in the air, ye children of the night. Often, like a reflected beam, are ye seen in the desart wild; but ye retire in your blasts before our steps approach. Go then, ye feeble race! knowledge with you there is none. Your joys are weak, and like the dreams of our rest, or the light-winged thought that flies across the soul. Shall Cathmor soon be low? Darkly laid in his narrow house? Where no morning comes with her half-opened eyes? Away, thou shade! To fight is mine! All further thought away! I rush forth, on eagle's wings, to seize my beam of fame. In the lonely vale of streams, abides the little[v] soul. Years roll on, seasons return, but he is still unknown. In a blast comes cloudy death, and lays his grey head low. His ghost is rolled on the

u The soliloquy of Cathmor abounds with that magnanimity and love of fame which constitute the hero. Though staggered at first with the predictions of Cairbar's ghost, he soon comforts himself with the agreeable prospect of his future renown: and, like Achilles, prefers a short and glorious life, to an obscure length of years in retirement and ease.

v From this passage we may learn in what extreme contempt an indolent and unwarlike life was held in those days of heroism. Whatever a philosopher may say in praise of quiet and retirement, I am far from thinking, but they weaken and debase the human mind. When the faculties of the soul are not exerted, they lose their vigour, and low and circumscribed notions take the place of noble and enlarged ideas. Action, on the contrary, and the vicissitudes of fortune which attend it, call forth, by turns, all the powers of the mind, and, by exercising, strengthen them. Hence it is, that in great and opulent states, when property and indolence are secured to individuals, we seldom meet with that strength of mind which is so common in a nation not far advanced in civilization. It is a curious, but just observation, that great kingdoms seldom produce great characters, which must be altogether attributed to that indolence and dissipation, which are the inseparable companions of too much property and security. Rome, it is certain, had more real great men within it, when its power was confined within the narrow bounds of Latium, than when its dominion extended over all the known world: and one petty state of the Saxon heptarchy had, perhaps, as much genuine spirit in it, as the two British kingdoms united. As a state, we are much more powerful than our ancestors, but we would lose by comparing individuals with them.

vapour of the fenny field. Its course is never on hills, or mossy vales of wind. So shall not Cathmor depart. No boy in the field was he, who only marks the bed of roes upon the echoing hills. My issuing forth was with kings, and my joy in dreadful plains; where broken hosts are rolled away, like seas before the wind."

So spoke the king of Alnecma, brightning in his rising soul: valour, like a pleasant flame, is gleaming within his breast. Stately is his stride on the heath: the beam of the east is poured around. He saw his grey host on the field, wide-spreading their ridges in light. He rejoiced like a spirit of heaven, whose steps come forth on his seas, when he beholds them peaceful round, and all the winds are laid. But soon he awakes the waves, and rolls them large to some echoing coast.

On the rushy bank of a stream, slept the daughter of Inis-huna. The helmet had fallen from her head. Her dreams were in the land of her fathers. There morning was on the field: grey streams leapt down from the rocks; the breezes, in shadowy waves, fly over the rushy fields. There is the sound that prepares for the chase; and the moving of warriors from the hall. But tall above the rest is the hero of streamy Atha: he bends his eye of love on Sul-malla. From his stately steps, she turns, with pride, her face away, and careless bends the bow.

Such were the dreams of the maid when Atha's warrior came. He saw her fair face before him, in the midst of her wandering locks. He knew the maid of Lumon. What should Cathmor do? His sigh arose: his tears came down. But straight he turned away. "This is no time, king of Atha, to wake thy secret soul. The battle is rolled before thee, like a troubled stream."

He struck that warning boss[w], wherein dwelt the voice of war. Erin rose around him, like the sound

[w] In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to look to the description of Cathmor's shield which the poet has given us in the seventh book. This shield had seven principal bosses, the sound of each of which, conveyed a particular order from the king to his tribes. The sound of one of them, as here, was the signal for the army to assemble.

of eagle-wings. Sul-malla started from sleep, in her disordered locks. She seized the helmet from earth, and trembled in her place. "Why should they know in Erin of the daughter of Inis-huna?" For she remembered the race of kings, and the pride of her soul arose. Her steps are behind a rock, by the blue-winding stream [x] of a vale, where dwelt the dark-brown hind, ere yet the war arose. Thither came the voice of Cathmor at times, to Sul-malla's ear. Her soul is darkly sad; she pours her words on wind.

"The dreams of Inis-huna departed: they are rolled away from my soul. I hear not the chase in my land. I am concealed in the skirts of war. I look forth from my cloud, but no beams appear to light my path. I behold my warrior low; for the broad-shielded king is near; he that overcomes in danger; Fingal of the spears. Spirit of departed Con-mor, are thy steps on the bosom of winds? Comest thou, at times, to other lands, father of sad Sul-malla? Thou dost come, for I have heard thy voice at night; while yet I rose on the wave to streamy Inis-fail. The ghost of fathers, they say,, can seize the souls of their race, while they behold them lonely in the midst of woe. Call me, my father, when the king is low on earth; for then I shall be lonely in the midst of woe."

x This was not the valley of Lona to which Sul-malla afterwards retired.

y Con-mor, the father of Sul-malla, was killed in that war, from which Cathmor delivered Inis-huna. Lormar his son succeeded Con-mor. It was the opinion of the times, when a person was reduced to a pitch of misery, which could admit of no alleviation, that the ghosts of his ancestors called his soul away. This supernatural kind of death was called the voice of the dead; and is believed by the superstitious vulgar to this day.

There is no people in the world, perhaps, who gave more universal credit to apparitions, and the visits of the ghosts of the deceased to their friends, than the common Highlanders. This is to be attributed as much, at least, to the situation of the country they possess, as to that credulous disposition which distinguishes an unenlightened people. As their business was feeding of cattle, in dark and extensive deserts, so their journeys lay over wide and unfrequented heaths, where often they were obliged to sleep in the open air, amidst the whistling of winds and the roar of water-falls. The gloominess of the scenes around them was apt to beget that melancholy disposition of mind, which most readily receives impressions of the extraordinary and supernatural kind. Falling asleep in this gloomy mood, and their dreams being disturbed by the noise of the elements around, it is no matter of wonder, that they thought they heard the voice of the dead. This voice of the dead, however, was, perhaps, no more than a shriller whistle of the winds in an old tree, or in the chinks of a neighbouring rock. It is to this cause I ascribe those many and improbable tales of ghosts, which we meet with in the Highlands: for, in other respects, we do not find that the Highlanders are more credulous than their neighbours.

TEMORA.

The Argument.

Ossian, after a short address to the harp of Cona, describes the arrangement of both armies on either side of the river Lubar Fingal gives the command to Fillan: but, at the same time, orders Gaul, the son of Morni, who had been wounded in the hand in the preceding battle, to assist him with his counsel. The army of the Firbolg is commanded by Foldath. The general onset is described. The great actions of Fillan. He kills Rothmar and Culmin. But when Fillan conquers in one wing Foldath presses hard on the other. He wounds Dermid, the son of Duthno, and puts the whole wing to flight. Dermid deliberates with himself, and, at last, resolves to put a stop to the progress of Foldath, by engaging him in single combat. When the two chiefs were approaching towards one another, Fillan came suddenly to the relief of Dermid; engaged Foldath, and killed him. The behaviour of Malthos towards the fallen Foldath.. Fillan puts the whole army of the Firbolg to flight The book closes with an address to Clatho, the mother of that hero.

BOOK V.

Thou dweller between the shields that hang on high in Ossian's hall! descend from thy place, O harp, and let me hear thy voice! Son of Alpin, strike the string; thou must awake the soul of the bard. The murmur of Lora's [z] stream has rolled the tale away. I stand in the cloud of years: few are its openings toward the past; and when the vision comes, it is but dim and dark. I hear thee, harp of Cona; my soul returns like a breeze, which the sun brings back to the vale where dwelt the lazy mist.

Lubar [a] is bright before me, in the windings of its vale. On either side, on their hills, rise the tall forms

z Lora is often mentioned, it was a small and rapid stream in the neighbourhood of Selma. There is no vestige of this name now remaining; though it appears from a very old song, which the translator has seen, that one of the small rivers on the north west coast was called Lora some centuries ago.

a From several passages in the poem, we may form a distinct idea of the scene of the action of Temora. At a small distance from one another rose the hills of Mora and Lona: the first possessed by Fingal, the second by the army of Cathmor. Through the intermediate plain ran the small river Lubar, on the banks of which all the battles were fought, excepting that between Cairbar and Oscar, related in the first book This last mentioned engagement happened to the north of the hill of Mora, of which Fingal took possession, after the army of Cairbar fell back to that of Cathmor. At some distance, but within sight of Mora towards the west, Lubar issued from the mountain of Crommal, and after a short course through the plain of Moi-lena, discharged itself into the sea near the field of battle. Behind the mountain of Crommal ran the small stream of Levath, on the banks of which Ferard-artho, the son of Cairbar, the only person remaining of the race of Conar, lived concealed in a cave, during the usurpation of Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul.

of the kings; their people are poured around them, bending forward to their words; as if their fathers spoke, descending from their winds. But the kings were like two rocks in the midst, each with its dark head of pines, when they are seen in the desart, above low-sailing mist. High on their face are streams, which spread their foam on blasts.

Beneath the voice of Cathmor poured Erin, like the sound of flame. Wide they came down to Lubar; before them is the stride of Foldath. But Cathmor retired to his hill, beneath his bending oaks. The tumbling of a stream is near the king: he lifts, at times, his gleaming spear. It was a flame to his people, in the midst of war. Near him stood the daughter of Con-mor, leaning on her rock. She did not rejoice over the strife: her soul delighted not in blood. A valley [b] spreads green behind the hill, with its three blue streams. The sun is there in silence: and the dun mountain-roes come down. On these are turned the eyes of Inis-huna's white-bosomed maid.

Fingal beheld, on high, the son of Borbar-duthul: he saw the deep rolling of Erin, on the darkened plain. He struck that warning boss, which bids the people obey; when he sends his chiefs before them, to the field of renown. Wide rose their spears to the sun; their echoing shields reply around. Fear, like a vapour, did not wind among the host: For he, the king, was near, the strength of streamy Morven. Gladness brightened the hero; we heard his words of joy.

"Like the coming forth of winds, is the sound of Morven's sons! They are mountain-waters, determined in their course. Hence is Fingal renowned, and his name in other lands. He was not a lonely beam in danger; for your steps were always near. But never was I a dreadful form in your presence darkened into wrath. My voice was no thunder to your ears: mine eyes sent forth no death. When the haughty appeared, I beheld them not. They were forgot at my feasts:

[b] It was to this valley Sul-malla retired, during the last and decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor. It is described in the seventh book, where it is called the vale of Lona, and the residence of a druid.

like mist they melted away. A young beam is before you: few are his paths to war. They are few; but he is valiant; defend my dark-haired son. Bring him back with joy: hereafter he may stand alone. His form is like his fathers; his soul is a flame of their fire. Son of car-borne Morni, move behind the son of Clatho: let thy voice reach his ear, from the skirts of war. Not unobserved rolls battle, before thee, breaker of the shields."

The king strode, at once, away to Cormul's lofty rock. As, slow, I lifted my steps behind, came forward the strength of Gaul. His shield hung loose on its thong; he spoke, in haste, to Ossian. "Bind[c], son of Fingal, this shield; bind it high on the side of Gaul. The foe may behold it, and think I lift the spear. If I shall fall, let my tomb be hid in the field; for fall I must, without my fame: mine arm cannot lift the steel. Let not Evir-choma hear it, to blush between her locks. Fillan, the mighty behold us! let us not forget the strife. Why should they come, from their hills, to aid our flying field?"

He strode onward, with the sound of his shield. My voice pursued him, as he went. "Can the son of Morni fall without his fame in Erin? But the deeds of the mighty forsake their souls of fire. They rush careless over the fields of renown: their words are never heard." I rejoiced over the steps of the chief: I strode to the rock of the king, where he sat in his wandering locks, amidst the mountain-wind.

In two dark ridges bend the hosts towards each other at Lubar. Here Foldath rose, a pillar of darkness; there brightened the youth of Fillan. Each with his spear in the stream, sent forth the voice of war. Gaul struck the shield of Morven: at once they plunge in battle. Steel poured its gleam on steel: like the fall of streams shone the field, when they mix their foam together, from two dark-browed rocks. Behold he comes, the son of fame: he lays the people low! Death

[c] It is necessary to remember, that Gaul was wounded; which occasions his requiring the assistance of Ossian to bind his shield on his side.

sit on blasts around him! Warriors strew thy paths, O Fillan!

Rothmar[d], the shield of warriors, stood between two chinky rocks. Two oaks which winds had bent from high, spread their branches on either side. He rolls his darkening eyes on Fillan, and silent, shades his friends. Fingal saw the approaching fight; and all his soul arose. But as the stone of Loda[e] falls, shook, at once, from rocking Druman-ard, when spirits heave the earth in their wrath; so fell blue-shielded Rothmar.

Near are the steps of Culmin; the youth came, bursting into tears. Wrathful he cut the wind, ere yet he mixed his strokes with Fillan. He had first bent the bow with Rothmar, at the rock of his own blue streams. There they had marked the place of the roe, as the sun-beam flew over the fern. Why, son of Cul-allin, dost thou rush on that beam[f] of light? It is a fire that consumes. Youth of Strutha retire. Your fathers were not equal, in the glittering strife of the field.

The mother of Culmin remains in the hall; she looks forth on blue-rolling Strutha. A whirlwind rises on the stream, dark-eddying round the ghost of her son. His dogs[g] are howling in their place: his shield is bloody

d Roth-mar, 'the sound of the sea before a storm.' Druman-ard, 'high ridge.' Culmin, 'soft-haired.' Cul-allin, 'beautiful locks.' Strutha, 'streamy river.'

e By the stone of Loda, as I have remarked in my notes on some other poems of Ossian, is meant a place of worship among the Scandinavians. Ossian, in his many expeditions to Orkney and Scandinavia, became acquainted with some of the rites of the religion which prevailed in those countries, and frequently alludes to them in his poems. There are some ruins, and circular pales of stones, remaining still in Orkney, and the islands of Shetland, which retain to this day the name of Loda, or Loden. They seem to have differed materially, in their construction, from those druidical monuments which remain in Britain, and the western isles. The places of worship among the Scandinavians were originally rude and unadorned. In after ages, when they opened a communication with other nations, they adopted their manners, and built temples. That at Upsal, in Sweden, was amazingly rich and magnificent. Haquin, of Norway, built one near Drontheim, little inferior to the former; and it went always under the name of Loden.—Mallet, introduction a l'histoire de Dannemarc.

f The poet, metaphorically, calls Fillan a beam of light. Culmin, mentioned here, was the son of Clonmar, chief of Strutha, by the beautiful Cul-allin. She was so remarkable for the beauty of her person, that she is introduced frequently in the similies and allusions of ancient poetry. "Mar Chul-aluin Strutha nan sian," is a simile of Ossian in another poem; i. e. Lovely as Cul-allin of Strutha of the storms.

g Dogs were thought to be sensible of the death of their master, let it happen at ever so great a distance. It was also the opinion of the times, that the arms which warriors left at home became bloody, when they themselves fell in battle. It was from those signs that Cul-allin is supposed to understand that her son is killed; in which she is confirmed by the appearance of his ghost. Her sudden and short exclamation, on the occasion, is more affecting than if she had extended her complaints to a greater length. The attitude of the fallen youth, and Fillan's reflections over him, are natural and judicious, and come forcibly back on the mind, when we consider that the supposed situation of the father of Culmin was so similar to that of Fingal, after the death of Fillan himself.

in the hall. "Art thou fallen, my fair-haired son, in Erin's dismal war?"

As a roe, pierced in secret, lies panting, by her wonted streams, the hunter looks over her feet of wind, and remembers her stately bounding before, so lay the son of Cul-allin, beneath the eye of Fillan. His hair is rolled in a little stream: his blood wandered on his shield. Still his hand held the sword, that failed him in the day of his danger. "Thou art fallen," said Fillan, "ere yet thy fame was heard. Thy father sent thee to war: and he expects to hear thy deeds. He is grey, perhaps, at his streams, turning his dim eyes towards Moi-lena. But thou shalt not return, with the spoil of the fallen foe."

Fillan poured the flight of Erin before him, over the echoing heath. But, man on man, fell Morven, before the dark-red rage of Foldath; for, far on the field, he poured the roar of half his tribes. Dermid stood before him in wrath: the sons of Cona gather round. But his shield is cleft by Foldath, and his people poured over the heath.

Then said the foe in his pride, "They have fled, and my fame begins. Go, Malthos, and bid the king to guard the dark-rolling of ocean; that Fingal may not escape from my sword. He must lie on earth. Beside some fen shall his tomb be seen. It shall rise without a song. His ghost shall hover in mist over the reedy pool."

Malthos heard, with darkening doubt; he rolled his silent eyes. He knew the pride of Foldath, and looked up to the king on his hill; then, darkly-turning, he plunged his sword in war.

In Clono's[b] narrow vale, where bend two trees above the streams, dark in his grief stood Duthno's silent son.

b This valley had its name from Clono, son of Lethmal of Lora, one of the ancestors of Dermid, the son of Duthno. His history is thus related in an old poem. In the days of Conar the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland, Clono passed over into that kingdom, from Caledonia, to aid Conar against the Firbolg. Being remarkable for the beauty of his person, he soon drew the attention of Sulmin, the young wife of an Irish chief. She disclosed her passion, which was not properly returned by the Caledonian. The lady sickened through disappointment, and her love for Clono came to the ears of her husband. Fired with jealousy, he vowed revenge. Clono, to avoid his rage, departed from Temora, in order to pass over into Scotland; and being be

The blood poured from his thigh: his shield lay broken near. His spear leaned against a stone. Why, Dermid, why so sad? "I hear the roar of battle. My people are alone. My steps are slow on the heath, and no shield is mine. Shall he then prevail? It is then after Dermid is low! I will call thee forth, O Foldath! and meet thee yet in fight."

He took his spear with dreadful joy. The son of Morni came. "Stay, son of Duthno, stay thy speed; thy steps are marked with blood. No bossy shield is thine. Why shouldest thou fall unarmed?" "King of Strumon, give thou thy shield. It has often rolled back the war. I shall stop the chief in his course. Son of Morni, dost thou behold that stone? It lifts its grey head through grass. There dwells a chief of the race of Dermid. Place me there in night."

He slowly rose against the hill, and saw the troubled field. The gleaming ridges of the fight, disjoined and broken round. As distant fires, on heath by night, now seem as lost in smoke, then rearing their red streams on the hill, as blow or cease the winds: so met the intermitting war the eye of broad-shielded Dermid. Through the host are the strides of Foldath, like some dark ship on wintry waves, when it issues from between two isles, to sport on echoing seas.

Dermid, with rage, beheld his course. He strove to rush along. But he failed in the midst of his steps; and the big tear came down. He sounded his father's horn; and thrice struck his bossy shield. He called

nighted in the valley mentioned here, he laid him down to sleep. "There, Lethmal descended in the dreams of Clono: and told him that danger was near."

Ghost of Lethmal. "Arise from thy bed of moss; son of low-laid Lethmal, arise. The sound of the coming of foes descends along the wind.

Clono. Whose voice is that, like many streams, in the season of my rest?

Ghost of Lethmal. Arise, thou dweller of the souls of the lovely; son of Lethmal, arise.

Clono. How dreary is the night! The moon is darkened in the sky; red are the paths of ghosts, along its sullen face! Green-skirted meteors set around. Dull is the roaring of streams, from the valley of dim forms. I hear thee, spirit of my father, on the eddying course of the wind. I hear thee, but thou bendest not forward thy tall form from the skirts of night."

As Clono prepared to depart, the husband of Sulmin came up, with his numerous attendants. Clono defended himself; but, after a gallant resistance, he was overpowered and slain. He was buried in the place where he was killed, and the valley was called after his name. Dermid, in his request to Gaul the son of Morni, which immediately follows this paragraph, alludes to the tomb of Clono, and his own connection with that unfortunate chief.

thrice the name of Foldath from his roaring tribes. Foldath, with joy, beheld the chief: he lifted high his bloody spear. As a rock is marked with streams, that fell troubled down its side in a storm; so streaked with wandering blood is the dark form of Moma. The host, on either side, withdrew, from the contending of kings. They raised, at once, their gleaming points. Rushing came Fillan of Moruth. Three paces back Foldath withdrew; dazzled with that beam of light which came, as issuing from a cloud, to save the wounded hero. Growing in his pride he stood, and called forth all his steel.

As meet two broad-winged eagles, in their sounding strife, on the winds; so rushed the two chiefs, on Moilena, into gloomy fight. By turns are the steps of the kings[i] forward on their rocks; for now the dusky war seems to descend on their swords. Cathmor feels the joy of warriors, on his mossy hill; their joy in secret when dangers rise equal to their souls. His eye is not turned on Lubar, but on Morven's dreadful king; for he beheld him, on Mora, rising in his arms.

Foldath[k] fell on his shield; the spear of Fillan pierced the king. Nor looked the youth on the fallen, but onward rolled the war. The hundred voices of death

i Fingal and Cathmor.

k The fall of Foldath, if we may believe tradition, was predicted to him before he had left his own country, to join Cairbar in his designs on the Irish throne. He went to the cave of Moma, to enquire of the spirits of his fathers concerning the success of the enterprise of Cairbar. The responses of oracles are always attended with obscurity, and liable to a double meaning; Foldath, therefore, put a favourable interpretation on the prediction, and pursued his adopted plan of aggrandising himself with the family of Atha. I shall here translate the answer of the ghosts of his ancestors, as it was handed down by tradition. Whether the legend is really ancient, or the invention of a later age, I shall not pretend to determine, though, from the phraseology, I should suspect the last.

FOLDATH, addressing the spirits of his fathers.

Dark, I stand in your presence; Fathers of Foldath, hear. Shall my steps pass over Atha, to Ullin of the roes?

THE ANSWER.

Thy steps shall pass over Atha, to the green dwelling of kings. There shall thy stature arise, over the fallen, like a pillar of thunder-clouds. There, terrible in darkness, shalt thou stand, till the reflected beam, or Clon-cath of Moruth, come: Moruth, of many streams, that roars in distant lands.

Clon-cath, or reflected beam, say my traditional authors, was the name of the sword of Fillan: so that it was in the latent signification of the word Clon-cath, that the deception lay. My principal reason for introducing this note, is, that if this tradition is equally ancient with the poem, which, by the by, is doubtful, it serves to shew that the religion of the Firbolg differed from that of the Caledonians, as we never find the latter enquiring of the spirits of their deceased ancestors.

arose. "Stay, son of Fingal, stay thy speed. Beholdest thou not that gleaming form, a dreadful sign of death? Awaken not the king of Alnecma. Return, son of blue-eyed Clatho."

Malthos[l] saw Foldath low. He darkly stood above the king. Hatred was rolled from his soul. He seemed a rock in the desart, on whose dark side are the trickling of waters, when the slow-sailing mist has left it, and his trees are blasted with winds. He spoke to the dying hero, about the narrow house. Whether shall thy grey stone rise in Ullin? or in Moma's[m] woody land, where the sun looks, in secret, on the blue streams of Dal-rutho[n]? There are the steps of thy daughter, blue-eyed Dardu-lena.

"Rememberest thou her," said Foldath, "because no son is mine; no youth to roll the battle before him, in revenge of me? Malthos, I am revenged. I was not peaceful in the field. Raise the tombs of those I have slain, around my narrow house. Often shall I forsake the blast, to rejoice over their graves; when I behold them spread around, with their long-whistling grass."

His soul rushed to the vales of Moma, and came to Dardu-lena's dreams, where she slept, by Dal-rutho's stream, returning from the chase of the hinds. Her bow is near the maid unstrung: the breezes fold her long hair on her breasts. Clothed in the beauty of youth, the love of heroes lay. Dark-bending, from the skirts of the wood, her wounded father came. He appeared at times, then seemed as hid in mist. Bursting into tears she rose: she knew that the chief was

l The characters of Foldath and Malthos are well sustained. They were both dark and surly, but each in a different way. Foldath was impetuous and cruel. Malthos stubborn and incredulous. Their attachment to the family of Atha was equal; their bravery in battle the same. Foldath was vain and ostentatious: Malthos unindulgent, but generous. His behaviour here, towards his enemy Foldath, shows, that a good heart often lies concealed under a gloomy and sullen character.

m Moma was the name of a country in the south of Connaught, once famous for for being the residence of an arch-druid. The cave of Moma was thought to be inhabited by the spirits of the chiefs of the Firbolg, and their posterity sent to enquire there, as to an oracle, concerning the issue of their wars.

n Dal-ruath, 'parched or sandy field.' The etymology of Dardu-lena is uncertain. The daughter of Foldath was, probably, so called from a place in Ulster, where her father had defeated part of the adherents of Artho, king of Ireland. Dardu-lena, 'the dark wood of Moi-lena.' As Foldath was proud and ostentatious, is would appear that he had transferred the name of a place, where he himself had been victorious, to his daughter.

low. To her came a beam from his soul when folded in its storms. Thou wert the last of his race, blue-eyed Dardu-lena!

Wide-spreading over echoing Lubar, the flight of Bolga is rolled along. Fillan hung forward on their steps; and strewed with dead the heath. Fingal rejoiced over his son. Blue-shielded Cathmor rose.

Son[o] of Alpin, bring the harp: give Fillan's praise to the wind: raise high his praise, in my hall, while yet he shines in war.

Leave, blue-eyed Clatho, leave thy hall. Behold that early beam of thine. The host is withered in its course. No further look—it is dark. Light trembling from the harp, strike, virgins, strike the sound. No hunter he descends from the dewy haunt of the bounding roe. He bends not his bow on the wind; or sends his grey arrow abroad.

Deep-folded in red war, the battle rolls against his side. Or, striding midst the ridgy strife, he pours the deaths of thousands forth. Fillan is like a spirit of heaven, that descends from the skirt of his blast. The troubled ocean feels his steps, as he strides from wave to wave. His path kindles behind him; islands shake their heads on the heaving seas.

o Those sudden transitions from the subject are not uncommon in the compositions of Ossian. That in this place has a peculiar beauty and propriety. The suspence in which the mind of the reader is left, conveys the idea of Fillan's danger more forcibly home, than any description which the poet could introduce. There is a sort of eloquence in silence with propriety. A minute detail of the circumstances of an important scene is generally cold and insipid. The human mind, free and fond of thinking for itself, is disgusted to find every thing done by the poet. It is, therefore, his business to mark the most striking outlines, and to allow the imaginations of his readers to finish the figure for themselves.

The book ends in the afternoon of the third day from the opening of the poem.

TEMORA.

The Argument.

This book opens with a speech of Fingal, who sees Cathmor descending to the assistance of his flying army. The king dispatches Ossian to the relief of Fillan. He himself retires behind the rock of Cormul, to avoid the sight of the engagement between his son and Cathmor. Ossian advances. The descent of Cathmor described. He rallies the army, renews the battle, and, before Ossian could arrive, engages Fillan himself. Upon the approach of Ossian, the combat between the two heroes ceases. Ossian and Cathmor prepare to fight, but night coming on, prevents them. Ossian returns to the place where Cathmor and Fillan fought. He finds Fillan mortally wounded, and leaning against a rock. Their discourse. Fillan dies: his body is laid, by Ossian, in a neighbouring cave. The Caledonian army return to Fingal. He questions them about his son, and understanding that he was killed, retires, in silence, to the rock of Cormul. Upon the retreat of the army of Fingal, the army of the Firbolg advance. Cathmor finds Bran, one of the dogs of Fingal, lying on the shield of Fillan, before the entrance of the cave, where the body of that hero lay. His reflections thereupon. He returns, in a melancholy mood, to his army. Malthos endeavours to comfort him, by the example of his father, Borbar-duthul. Cathmor retires to rest. The song of Sul-malla concludes the book, which ends about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem.

BOOK VI.

"CATHMOR rises on his echoing hill! Shall Fingal take the sword of Luno? But what shall become of thy fame, son of white-bosomed Clatho? Turn not thine eyes from Fingal, daughter of Inistore. I shall not quench thy early beam; it shines along my soul. But rise, O wood-skirted Mora, rise between the war and me! Why should Fingal behold the strife, lest his dark-haired warrior should fall! Amidst the song, O Carril, pour the sound of the trembling harp; here are the voices of rocks, and bright tumbling of waters. Father of Oscar, lift the spear; defend the young in arms. Conceal thy steps from Fillan's eyes. He must not know that I doubt his steel. No cloud of mine shall rise, my son, upon thy soul of fire!"

He sunk behind his rock, amidst the sound of Carril's song. Brightening, in my growing soul, I took the spear of Temora[p]. I saw, along Moi-lena, the

[p] The spear of Temora was that which Oscar had received, in a present, from Cormac the son of Artho, king of Ireland. It was of it that Cairbar made the pretext for quarreling with Oscar, at the feast, in the first book.

with tumbling of battle, the strife of death, in gleaming rows, disjoined and broken round. Fillan is a beam of fire. From wing to wing is his wasteful course. The ridges of war melt before him. They are rolled, in smoke from the fields.

Now is the coming forth of Cathmor, in the armour of kings! Dark-rolled the eagle's wing above his helmet of fire. Unconcerned are his steps, as if they were to the chase of Atha. He raised, at times, his dreadful voice; Erin, abashed, gathered round. Their souls returned back, like a stream; they wondered at the steps of their foe: for he rose, like the beam of the morning on a haunted heath: the traveller looks back, with bending eye, on the field of dreadful forms. Sudden, from the rock of Moi-lena, are Sul-malla's trembling steps. An oak took the spear from her hand; scarcely she loosed the lance: but then are her eyes on the king, from amidst her wandering locks. "No friendly strife is before thee; no light contending of bows, as when the youth of Cluba[q] came forth beneath the eye of Con-mor."

As the rock of Runo, which takes the passing clouds from its robe, seems growing in gathered darkness over the streamy heath; so seemed the chief of Atha taller, as gathered his people round. As different blasts fly over the sea, each behind its dark-blue wave, so Cathmor's words, on every side, poured his warriors forth. Nor silent on his hill is Fillan; he mixed his words with his echoing shield. An eagle he seemed, with sounding wings, calling the wind to his rock, when he sees the coming forth of the roes, on Lutha's[r] rushy field. Now they bend forward in battle: death's hundred voices rose; for the kings on either side were like fires on the souls of the people. I bounded along: high rocks and trees rushed tall between the war and

q Cluba, 'winding bay;' an arm of the sea in Inis-huna, or the western coast of South Britain. It was in this bay that Cathmor was wind-bound when Sul-malla came in the disguise of a young warrior, to accompany him in his voyage to Ireland. Con-mor, the father of Sul-malla, as we learn from her soliloquy, at the close of the fourth book, was dead before the departure of his daughter.

r Lutha was the name of a valley in Morven, in the days of Ossian. There dwelt Toscar the son of Conloch, the father of Malvina, who, upon that account, is often called the maid of Lutha. Lutha signifies 'swift stream.'

me. But I heard the noise of steel between my clanging arms. Rising, gleaming, on the hill, I beheld the backward steps of hosts: their backward steps on either side, and wildly-looking eyes. The chiefs were met in dreadful fight; the two blue-shielded kings. Tall and dark, through gleams of steel, are seen the striving heroes. I rushed. My fears for Fillan flew, burning across my soul.

I came; nor Cathmor fled, nor yet advanced: he side-long stalked along. An icy rock, cold, tall he seemed. I called forth all my steel. Silent awhile we strode, on either side of a rushing stream: then, sudden turning, all at once, we raised our pointed spears. We raised our spears, but night came down. It is dark and silent around: but where the distant steps of hosts are sounding over the heath.

I came to the place where Fillan fought. Nor voice nor sound is there. A broken helmet lay on earth; a buckler cleft in twain. "Where, Fillan, where art thou, young chief of echoing Morven?" He heard me leaning against a rock, which bent its grey head over the stream. He heard; but sullen, dark he stood. At length I saw the chief.

"Why standest thou, robed in darkness, son of woody Selma? Bright is thy path, my brother, in this dark-brown field. Long has been thy strife in battle. Now the horn of Fingal is heard. Ascend to the cloud of thy father, to his hill of feasts. In the evening mist he sits, and hears the voice of Carril's harp. Carry joy to the aged, young breaker of the shields."

"Can the vanquished carry joy? Ossian, no shield is mine. It lies broken on the field. The eagle wing of my helmet is torn. It is when foes fly before them that fathers delight in their sons. But their sighs burst forth, in secret, when their young warriors yield. No: Fillan will not behold the king. Why should the hero mourn?"

"Son of blue-eyed Clatho, why dost thou awake my soul? Wert thou not a burning fire before him; and shall he not rejoice? Such fame belonged not to

Ossian; yet was the king still a sun to me. He looked on my steps with joy; shadows never rose on his face. Ascend, O Fillan, to Mora: his feast is spread in the folds of mist."

"Ossian, give me that broken shield; these feathers that are rolled in the wind. Place them near to Fillan, that less of his fame may fall. Ossian I begin to fail. Lay me in that hollow rock. Raise no stone above: lest one should ask about my fame. I am fallen in the first of my fields: fallen without renown. Let thy voice alone send joy to my flying soul. Why should the feeble know where dwells the lost beam of Clatho†."

"Is thy spirit on the eddying winds, blue-eyed king of shields? Joy pursue my hero, through his folded clouds. The forms of thy fathers, O Fillan, bend to receive their son. I behold the spreading of their fire on Mora! the blue-rolling of their misty wreaths. Joy meet thee, my brother. But we are dark and sad. I behold the foe round the aged, and the wasting away of his fame. Thou art left alone in the field, grey-haired king of Selma."

I laid him in the hollow rock, at the roar of the nightly stream. One red star looked in on the hero: winds lift, at times, his locks. I listened: no sound

† A dialogue between Clatho, the mother, and Bosmina, the sister of that hero.

Clatho "Daughter of Fingal, arise: thou light between thy locks. I lift thy fair head from rest, soft-gliding sun-beam of Selma! I beheld thy arms, on thy breast white-tossed amidst thy wandering locks: when the rustling breeze of the morning came from the desart of streams. Hast thou seen thy fathers, Bos-mina, descending in thy dreams? Arise, daughter of Clatho, dwells there aught of grief in thy soul?"

Bos-mina. "A thin form passed before me, fading as it flew: like the darkening wave of a breeze, along a field of grass. Descend, from thy wall, O harp, and call back the soul of Bos-mina, it has rolled away like a stream. I hear thy pleasant sound I hear thee, O harp, and my voice shall rise.

How often shall ye rush to war, ye dwellers of my soul? Your paths are distant kings of men, in Erin of blue streams. Lift thy wing, thou southern breeze, from Cono's darkening heath, spread the sails of Fingal towards the bays of his land.

But who is that in his strength, darkening in the presence of war? His arm stretches to the foe, like the beam of the sickly sun; when his side is crusted with darkness and he rolls his dismal course through the sky. Who is it but the father of Bos-mina Shall he return till danger is past?

Fillan, thou art a beam by his side; beautiful but terrible is thy light. Thy sword is before thee a blue fire of night. When shalt thou return to thy roes; to the streams of thy rushy fields? When shall I behold thee from Mora, while winds strew my lock on moss? But shall a young eagle return from the field where the heroes fall?

Clatho. Soft, as the song of Loda, is the voice of Selma's maid. Pleasant to the ear of Clatho is the name of the breaker of shields. Behold the king comes from ocean, the shield of Morven is borne by bards. The foe has fled before him, like the departure of mist. I hear not the sounding wings of my eagle; the rushing forth of the son of Clatho. Thou art dark, O Fingal; shall he not return!—

was heard: for the warrior slept. As lightning on a cloud, a thought came rushing over my soul. My eyes rolled in fire: my stride was in the clang of steel. "I will find thee, chief of Atha, in the gathering of thy thousands. Why should that cloud escape, that quenched our early beam? Kindle your meteors, my fathers, to light my daring steps. I will consume in wrath *u*. Should I not return! the king is without a son, grey-haired amidst his foes. His arm is not as in the days of old: his fame grows dim in Erin. Let me not behold him from high, laid low in his latter field. But can I return to the king? Will he not ask about his son? "Thou oughtest to defend young Fillan." I will meet the foe. Green Inisfail, thy sounding tread is pleasant to my ear: I rush on the ridgy host, to shun the eyes of Fingal. I hear the voice of the king, on Mora's misty top! he calls his two sons; I come, my father, in my grief. I come like an eagle, which the flame of night met in the desart, and spoiled of half his wings."

Distant *v*, round the king, on Mora, the broken ridges of Morven are rolled. They turned their eyes; each darkly bends, on his own ashen spear. Silent stood the king in the midst. Thought on thought rolled over his soul. As waves on a secret mountain-lake, each with its back of foam. He looked; no son appeared, with his long-beaming spear. The sighs rose, crowding from his soul: but he concealed his

u Here the sentence is designedly left unfinished by the poet. The sense is, that he was resolved, like a destroying fire, to consume Cathmor, who had killed his brother. In the midst of this resolution, the situation of Fingal suggests itself to him, in a very strong light. He resolves to return to assist the king in prosecuting the war. But then his shame for not defending his brother, recurs to him. He is determined again, to go and find out Cathmor. We may consider him as in the act of advancing towards the enemy, when the horn of Fingal sounded on Mora, and called back his people to his presence. The soliloquy is natural: the resolutions which so suddenly follow one another, are expressive of a mind extremely agitated with sorrow and conscious shame; yet the behaviour of Ossian, in the execution of the command of Fingal, is so irreprehensible, that it is not easy to determine where he failed in his duty. The truth is, that when men fail in designs which they ardently wish to accomplish, they naturally blame themselves, as the chief cause of their disappointment.

v This scene is solemn. The poet always places his chief character amidst objects which favour the sublime. The face of the country, the night, the broken remains of a defeated army, and, above all, the attitude and silence of Fingal himself are circumstances calculated to impress an awful idea on the mind. Ossian is most successful in his night descriptions. Dark images suited the melancholy temper of his mind. His poems were all composed after the active part of his life was over, when he was blind, and had survived all the companions of his youth; we therefore find a veil of melancholy thrown over the whole.

grief. At length I stood beneath an oak. No voice of mine was heard. What could I say to Fingal in his hour of woe? His words rose, at length, in the midst: the people shrunk backward as he spoke [w].

"Where is the son of Selma, he who led in war? I behold not his steps, among my people, returning from the field. Fell the young bounding roe, who was so stately on my hills? He fell; for ye are silent. The shield of war is broke. Let his armour be near to Fingal; and the sword of dark-brown Luno. I am waked on my hills: with morning I descend to war."

"High [x] on Cormul's rock, an oak flamed to the wind. The grey skirts of mist are rolled around: thither strode the king in his wrath. Distant from the host he always lay, when battle burned within his soul

[w] The abashed behaviour of the army of Fingal, proceeds rather from shame than fear. The king was not of a tyrannical disposition: he, as he professes himself in the fifth book, "never was a dreadful form, in their presence, darkened into wrath. His voice was no thunder to their ears: his eye sent forth no death." The first ages of society are not the times of arbitrary power. As the wants of mankind are few, they retain their independence. It is an advanced state of civilization that moulds the mind to that submission to government, of which ambitious magistrates take advantage, and raise themselves into absolute power.

It is a vulgar error, that the common Highlanders lived in abject slavery, under the chiefs. Their high idea of, and attachment to the heads of their families, probably led the unintelligent into this mistake. When the honour of the tribe was concerned, the commands of the chiefs were obeyed without restriction: but if individuals were oppressed, they threw themselves into the arms of a neighbouring clan, assumed a new name, and were encouraged and protected. The fear of this desertion, no doubt, made the chiefs cautious in their government. As their consequence, in the eyes of others, was in proportion to the number of their people, they took care to avoid every thing that tended to diminish it.

It was but very lately that the authority of laws extended to the Highlands. Before that time the clans were governed, in civil affairs, not by the verbal command of the chief, but by what they called Clechda, or the traditional precedents of the ancestors. When differences happened between individuals, some of the oldest men in the tribe were chosen umpires between the parties, to decide according to the Clechda. The chief interposed his authority, and invariably enforced the decision. In the wars, which were frequent on account of family feuds, the chief was less reserved in the execution of his authority; and even then he seldom extended it to the taking the life of any of his tribe. No crime was capital except murder; and that was very unfrequent in the Highlands. No corporal punishment, of any kind, was inflicted. The memory of an affront of this sort would remain, for ages, in a family, and they would seize every opportunity to be revenged, unless it came immediately from the hands of the chief himself; in that case it was taken, rather as a fatherly correction, than a legal punishment for offences.

[x] This rock of Cormul is often mentioned in the preceding part of the poem. It was on it Fingal and Ossian stood to view the battle. The custom of retiring from the army on the night prior to their engaging in battle, was universal among the kings of the Caledonians. Trenmor, the most renowned of the ancestors of Fingal, is mentioned as the first who instituted this custom. Succeeding bards attributed it to a hero of a latter period. In an old poem, which begins with "Mac-Arcath nan ceud srol," this custom of retiring from the army, before an engagement, is numbered among the wise institutions of Fergus, the son of Arc or Arcath, the first king of Scots. I shall here translate the passage; in some other note I may probably give all that remains of the poem. "Fergus of the hundred streams, son of Arcath who fought of old: thou didst first retire at night: when the foe rolled before thee, in echoing fields. Nor bending in retire is the king: he gathers battle in his soul. Fly, son of the stranger; with morn he shall rush abroad." When, or by whom, this poem was writ is uncertain.

On two spears hung his shield on high; the gleaming sign of death; that shield, which he was wont to strike, by night, before he rushed to war. It was then his warriors knew, when the king was to lead in strife; for never was his buckler heard, till Fingal's wrath arose. Unequal were his steps on high, as he shone in the beam of the oak; he was dreadful as the form of the spirit of night, when he clothes, on hills, his wild gestures with mist, and, issuing forth, on the troubled ocean, mounts the car of winds.

Nor settled, from the storm, is Erin's sea of war; they glittered beneath the moon, and, low-humming, still rolled on the field. Alone are the steps of Cathmor, before them on the heath; he hung forward, with all his arms, on Morven's flying host. Now had he come to the mossy cave, where Fillan lay in night. One tree was bent above the stream, which glittered over the rock. There shone to the moon the broken shield of Clatho's son; and near it, on grass, lay hairey-footed Bran[*]. He had missed the chief on Mora, and searched him along the wind. He thought that the blue-eyed hunter slept; he lay upon his shield. No blast came over the heath, unknown to bounding Bran.

Cathmor saw the white-breasted dog; he saw the broken shield. Darkness is blown back on his soul; he remembers the falling away of the people. "They come, a stream: are rolled away; another race succeeds. But some mark the fields, as they pass, with their own mighty names. The heath, through dark-

[*] This circumstance, concerning Bran, the favourite dog of Fingal, is, perhaps, one of the most affecting passages in the poem. I remember to have met with an old poem, composed long after the time of Ossian, wherein a story of this sort is very happily introduced. In one of the invasions of the Danes, Ullin-Clunda, a considerable chief, on the western coast of Scotland, was killed in a rencounter with a flying party of the enemy, who had landed, at no great distance from the place of his residence. The few followers who attended him were also slain. The young wife of Ullin-Clunda, who had not heard of his fall, fearing the worst, on account of his long delay, alarmed the rest of the tribe, who went in search of him along the shore. They did not find him; and the beautiful widow became disconsolate. At length he was discovered, by means of his dog, who sat on a rock beside the body, for some days. The poem is not just now my hands, otherwise its poetical merit might induce me to present the reader with a translation of it. The stanza concerning the dog, whose name was Du-chos, or Blackfoot, is very descriptive.

"Dark-sided Du-chos! feet of wind! cold is thy seat on rocks. He (the dog) sees the roes; his ears are high; and half he bounds away. He looks around; but Ullin sleeps: he droops again his head. The winds come past; dark Du-chos thinks that Ullin's voice is there. But still he beholds him silent, laid amidst the waving heath. Dark-sided Du-chos, his voice shall no more send thee over the heath!"

brown years is theirs; some blue stream, winds to their fame. Of these be the chief of Atha, when he lays him down on earth. Often may the voice of future times meet Cathmor in the air; when he strides from wind to wind, or folds himself in the wing of a storm."

Green Erin gathered round the king, to hear the voice of his power. The joyful faces bend, unequal, forward in the light of the oak. They who were terrible were removed: Lubar[z] winds again in their host. Cathmor was that beam from heaven which shone when his people were dark. He was honoured in the midst. Their souls rose trembling around. The king alone no gladness showed: no stranger he to war!

"Why is the king so sad?" said Malthos eagle-eyed, "Remains there a foe at Lubar? Lives there among them who can lift the spear? Not so peaceful was thy father, Borbar-duthul[a], sovereign of spears. His rage was a fire that always burned: his joy over fallen foes was great. Three days feasted the grey-haired hero, when he heard that Calmar fell: Calmar, who aided the race of Ullin, from Lara of the streams. Often did he feel, with his hands, the steel, which, they said, had pierced his foe. He felt it with his hands, for Borbar-duthul's eyes had failed. Yet was the king a sun to his friends; a gale to lift their branches round. Joy was around him in his halls: he loved the sons of Bolga. His name remains in Atha, like the awful me-

[z] In order to illustrate this passage, it is proper to lay before the reader the scene of the two preceding battles. Between the hills of Mora and Lona lay the plain of Moilena, through which ran the river Lubar. The first battle, wherein Gaul the son of Morni commanded on the Caledonian side, was fought on the banks of Lubar. As there was little advantage obtained, on either side, the armies, after the battle, retained their former positions.

In the second battle, wherein Fillan commanded, the Irish, after the fall of Foldath, were driven up the hill of Lona; but upon the coming of Cathmor to their aid, they regained their former situation, and drove back the Caledonians in their turn: so that Lubar winded again in their host.

[a] Borbar-duthul, the father of Cathmor, was the brother of that Colc-ulla, who is said, in the beginning of the fourth book, to have rebelled against Cormac king of Ireland. Borbar-duthul seems to have retained all the prejudice of his family against the succession of the posterity of Conar, on the Irish throne. From this short episode we learn some facts, which tend to throw light on the history of the times. It appears, that when Swaran invaded Ireland, he was only opposed by the Cael, who possessed Ulster, and the north of that island. Calmar, the son of Matha, whose gallant behaviour and death are related in the third book of Fingal, was the only chief of the race of the Firbolg that joined the Cael, or Irish Caledonians, during the invasion of Swaran. The indecent joy which Borbar-duthul expressed, upon the death of Calmar, is well suited with that spirit of revenge, which subsisted, universally, in every country where the feudal system was established. It would appear that some person had carried to Borbar-duthul that weapon with which, it was pretended, Calmar had been killed.

mory of ghosts, whose presence was terrible, but they blew the storm away. Now let the voices [b] of Erin raise the soul of the king; he that shone when war was dark, and laid the mighty low. Fonar, from that grey-browed rock, pour the tale of other times: pour it on wide-skirted Erin, as it settles round."

"To me," said Cathmor, "no song shall rise: nor Fonar sit on the rock of Lubar. The mighty there are laid low. Disturb not their rushing ghosts. Far, Malthos, far remove the sound of Erin's song. I rejoice not over the foe, when he ceases to lift the spear. With morning we pour our strength abroad. Fingal is wakened on his echoing hill."

Like waves blown back by sudden winds, Erin retired at the voice of the king. Deep rolled into the field of night, they spread their humming tribes: beneath his own tree, at intervals, each [c] bard sat down with his harp. They raised the song, and touched the string: each to the chief he loved. Before a burning oak Sul-malla touched at times the harp. She touched the harp, and heard between, the breezes in her hair. In darkness, near, lay the king of Atha, beneath an aged tree. The beam of the oak was turned from him; he saw the maid, but was not seen. His soul poured forth, in secret, when he beheld her tearful eye. "But battle is before thee, son of Borbar-duthul."

[b] 'The voices of Erin,' a poetical expression for the bards of Ireland.

[c] Not only the kings, but every petty chief, had their bards attending them, in the field, in the days of Ossian; and these bards, in proportion to the power of the chiefs who retained them, had a number of inferior bards in their train. Upon solemn occasions, all the bards in the army would join in one chorus, either when they celebrated their victories, or lamented the death of a person, worthy and renowned, slain in the war. The words were of the composition of the arch-bard, retained by the king himself, who generally attained to that high office, on account of his superior genius for poetry. As the persons of the bards were sacred, and the emoluments of their office considerable, the order, in succeeding times, became very numerous, and insolent. It would appear, that after the introduction of Christianity, some served in the double capacity of bards and clergymen. It was, from this circumstance, that they had the name of Chlere, which is, probably, derived from the Latin Clericus. The Chlere, be their name derived from what it will, became at last a public nuisance; for, taking advantage of their sacred character, they went about in great bodies, and lived at discretion in the houses of the chiefs; till another party of the same order, drove them away by mere dint of satire. Some of the indelicate disputes of these worthy poetical combatants are handed down by tradition, and show how much the bards at last abused the privileges, which the admiration of their countrymen had conferred on the order. It was this insolent behaviour that induced the chiefs to retrench their number, and to take away those privileges which they were no longer worthy to enjoy. Their indolence, and disposition to lampoon, extinguished all the poetical fervour which distinguished their predecessors, and makes us the less regret the extinction of the order.

Amidst the harp, at intervals, she listened whether the warriors slept. Her soul was up; she longed, in secret, to pour her own sad song. The field is silent. On their wings the blasts of night retire. The bards had ceased; and meteors came, red winding with their ghosts. The sky grew dark: the forms of the dead were blended with the clouds. But heedless bends the daughter of Con-mor over the decaying flame. Thou wert alone in her soul, car-borne chief of Atha. She raised the voice of the song, and touched the harp between.

"Clun-galo[d] came; she missed the maid. Where art thou, beam of light? Hunters from the mossy rock, saw you the blue-eyed fair? Are her steps on grassy Lumon; near the bed of roes? Ah me! I behold her bow in the hall. Where art thou, beam of light?"

"Cease[e], love of Con-mor, cease; I hear thee not on the ridgy heath. My eye is turned to the king, whose path is terrible in war. He for whom my soul is up, in the season of my rest. Deep-bosomed in war he stands, he beholds me not from his cloud. Why, sun of Sul-malla, dost thou not look forth? I dwell in darkness here: wide over me flies the shadowy mist. Filled with dew are my locks: look thou from thy cloud, O sun of Sul-malla's soul!" * * * * *

d Clun-galo, 'white knee, the wife of Con-mor, king of Inis-huna, and the mother of Sul-malla. She is here represented, as missing her daughter, after she had fled with Cathmor.

e Sul-malla replies to the supposed questions of her mother. Towards the middle of this paragraph she calls Cathmor the sun of her soul, and continues the metaphor throughout. This book ends, we may suppose, about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

TEMORA:

The Argument.

This book begins about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. The poet describes a kind of mist, which rose, by night, from the lake of Lego, and was the usual residence of the souls of the dead, during the interval between their decease and the funeral song. The appearance of the ghost of Fillan above the cave where his body lay. His voice comes to Fingal, on the rock of Cormul. The king strikes the shield of Trenmor, which was an infallible sign of his appearing in arms himself. The extraordinary effect of the sound of the shield. Sul-malla, starting from sleep, awakes Cathmor. Their affecting discourse. She insists with him, to sue for peace; he resolves to continue the war. He directs her to retire to the neighbouring valley of Lona, which was the residence of an old druid, until the battle of the next day should be over. He awakes his army with the sound of his shield. The shield described. Fonar, the bard, at the desire of Cathmor, relates the first settlement of the Firbolg in Ireland, under their leader Larthon. Morning comes. Sul-malla retires to the valley of Lona. A lyric song concludes the book.

BOOK VII.

From the wood-skirted waters of Lego, ascend, at times, grey-bosomed mists, when the gates of the west are closed on the sun's eagle-eye. Wide, over Lara's stream, is poured the vapour dark and deep: the moon, like a dim shield, is swimming through its folds. With this, clothe the spirits of old their sudden gestures on the wind, when they stride, from blast to blast, along the dusky face of the night. Often blended with the gale, to some warrior's grave [d] they roll the mist, a grey dwelling to his ghost, until the songs arise.

A sound came from the desart! the rushing course of Conar in winds. He poured his deep mist on Fillan, at blue-winding Lubar. Dark and mournful sat the ghost, bending in his grey ridge of smoke. The blast, at times, rolled him together: but the lovely form re-

d As the mist which rose from the lake of Lego, occassioned diseases and death, the bards feigned, as here, that it was the residence of the ghosts of the deceased, during the interval between their death and the pronouncing of the funeral elegy over their tombs; for it was not allowable, without that ceremony was performed, for the spirits of the dead to mix with their ancestors, in their airy halls. It was the business of the spirit of the nearest relation to the deceased, to take the mist of Lego, and pour it over the grave. We find here Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland, according to Ossian, performing this office for Fillan, as it was in the cause of the family of Conar, that that hero was killed.

turned again. It returned with slow-bending eyes, and dark-winding of locks of mist.

It was [e] dark. The sleeping host were still, in the skirts of night. The flame decayed on the hill of Fingal; the king lay lonely on his shield. His eyes were half-closed in sleep; the voice of Fillan came. "Sleeps the husband of Clatho? Dwells the father of the fallen in rest? Am I forgot in the folds of darkness; lonely in the season of dreams?"

"Why art thou in the midst of my dreams?" said Fingal; as sudden he rose. "Can I forget thee, my son, or thy path of fire in the field? Not such, on the soul of the king, come the deeds of the mighty in arms. They are not there a beam of lightning, which is seen, and is then no more. I remember thee, O Fillan! and my wrath begins to rise."

The king took his deathful spear, and struck the deeply-sounding shield: his shield that hung high on night, the dismal sign of war? Ghosts fled on every side, and rolled their gathered forms on the wind. Thrice from the winding vale arose the voices of death. The harps [f] of the bards, untouched, sound mournful over the hill.

He struck again the shield, battles rose in the dreams of his host. The wide-tumbling strife is gleaming over their souls. Blue-shielded kings descend to war. Backward-looking armies fly; and mighty deeds are half-hid in the bright gleams of steel.

[e] The night-descriptions of Ossian were in high repute among succeeding bards. One of them delivered a sentiment, in a distich more favourable to his taste for poetry, than to his gallantry towards the ladies. I shall here give a translation of it.

"More pleasant to me is the night of Coua, dark-streaming from Ossian's harp: more pleasant is it to me, than a white-bosomed dweller between my arms: than a fair-handed daughter of heroes, in the hour of rest."

Though tradition is not very satisfactory concerning the history of this poet, it has taken care to inform us that he was very old when he wrote the distich. He lived (in what age, is uncertain) in one of the western isles, and his name was Turloch Ciabglas, or Turloch of the grey locks.

[f] It was the opinion of the times, that on the night preceding the death of a person worthy and renowned, the harps of those bards, who were retained by his family, emitted melancholy sounds. This was attributed, to use Ossian's expression, to the light touch of ghosts; who were supposed to have foreknowledge of events. The same opinion prevailed long in the north, and the particular sound was called, the warning voice of the dead. The voice of deaths mentioned in the preceding sentence, was of a different kind. Each person was supposed to have an attendant spirit, who assumed his form and voice, on the night preceding his death, and appeared to some, in the attitude in which the person was to die. The voices of death were the foreboding shrieks of those spirits.

But when the third sound arose, deer started from the clefts of their rocks. The screams of fowl are heard, in the desart, as each flew, frighted, on his blast. The sons of Albion half rose, and half-assumed their spears. But silence rolled back on the host: they knew the shield of the king. Sleep returned to their eyes: the field was dark and still.

No sleep was thine in darkness, blue-eyed daughter of Con-mor! Sul-malla heard the dreadful shield, and rose amidst the night. Her steps are towards the king of Atha. "Can danger shake his daring soul!" In doubt, she stands, with bending eyes. Heaven burns with all its stars.

Again the shield resounds! She rushed. She stopt. Her voice half-rose. It failed. She saw him, amidst his arms, that gleamed to heaven's fire. She saw him dim in his locks that rose to nightly wind. Away for fear, she turned her steps. "Why should the king of Erin awake? Thou art not a dream to his rest, daughter of Inis-huna."

More dreadful rung the shield, Sul-malla starts. Her helmet falls. Loud echoed Lubar's rock, as over it rolled the steel. Bursting from the dreams of night, Cathmor half-rose beneath his tree. He saw the form of the maid, above him, on the rock. A red star with twinkling beam looked down through her floating hair.

"Who comes through night to Cathmor, in the dark season of his dreams? Bringest thou ought of war? Who art thou, son of night? Standest thou before me, a form of the times of old? a voice from the fold of a cloud, to warn me of Erin's danger?

"Nor traveller of night am I, nor voice from folded cloud: but I warn thee of the danger of Erin. Dost thou hear that sound? It is not the feeble, king of Atha, that rolls his signs on night."

"Let the warrior roll his signs; to Cathmor they are the sound of harps. My joy is great, voice of night, and burns over all my thoughts. This is the music of kings, on lonely hills by night: when they light their

daring souls, the sons of mighty deeds! the feeble dwell alone, in the valley of the breeze; where mists lift their morning skirts, from the blue-winding streams."

"Not feeble, thou leader of heroes, were they, the fathers of my race. They dwelt in the darkness of battle: in their distant lands. Yet delights not my soul in the signs of death! He [g] who never yields, comes forth: Awake the bard of peace!"

Like a rock with its trickling waters, stood Cathmor in his tears. Her voice came, a breeze on his soul, and waked the memory of her land; where she dwelt by her peaceful streams, before he came to the war of Con-mor.

"Daughter of strangers," he said; (she trembling turned away) "long have I marked in her armour, the young pine of Inis-huna. But my soul, I said, is folded in a storm. Why should that beam arise, till my steps return in peace? have I been pale in thy presence, when thou bidst me to fear the king? The time of danger, O maid, is the season of my soul; for then it swells a mighty stream, and rolls me on the foe.

"Beneath the moss-covered rock of Lona, near his own winding stream: grey in his locks of age, dwells Clonmal [b] king of harps. Above him is his echoing oak, and the dun-bounding of roes. The noise of our strife reaches his ear, as he bends in the thoughts of years. There let thy rest be, Sul-malla, until our battle cease. Until I return, in my arms, from the skirts of the evening mist that rises on Lona, round the dwelling of my love."

A light fell on the soul of the maid; it rose kindled before the king. She turned her face to Cathmor: her locks are struggling with winds. "Sooner shall the

g Fingal is said to have never been overcome in battle. From this proceeded that title of honour which is always bestowed on him in tradition, 'Fion-ghal na buai,' Fingal of Victories.' In a poem, just now in my hands, which celebrates some of the great actions of Arthur the famous British hero, that appellation is often bestowed on him. The poem, from the phraseology, appears to be ancient: and is, perhaps, though that is not mentioned, a translation from the Welsh language.

b Claon-mal, 'crooked eye-brow.' From the retired life of this person, it appears, that he was of the order of the druids; which supposition is not, at all, invalidated by the appellation of 'king of harps,' here bestowed on him; for all agree that the bards were of the number of the druids originally.

eagle of heaven be torn from the streams of his roaring wind, when he sees the dun prey before him, the young sons of the bounding roe, than thou, O Cathmor, be turned from the strife of renown. Soon may I see thee, warrior, from the skirts of the evening mist, when it is rolled around me, on Lona of the streams. While yet thou are distant far, strike, Cathmor, strike the shield, that joy may return to my darkened soul, as I lean on the mossy rock. But if thou should fall—I am in the land of strangers; O send thy voice, from thy cloud, to the maid of Inis-huna."

"Young branch of green-headed Lumon, why dost thou shake in the storm? Often has Cathmor returned, from darkly-rolling wars. The darts of death are but hail to me; they have often bounded from my shield. I have risen brightened from battle, like a meteor from a stormy cloud. Return not, fair beam, from thy vale, when the roar of battle grows. Then might the foe escape, as from my fathers of old.

"They told to Son-mor[i], of Clunar[k], slain by Cormac the giver of shells. Three days darkened Son-mor, over his brother's fall. His spouse beheld the silent king, and foresaw his steps to war. She prepared the bow in secret, to attend her blue-shielded hero. To her dwelt darkness at Atha, when the warrior moved to his fields. From their hundred streams by night, poured down the sons of Alnecma. They had heard the shield of the king, and their rage arose. In clanging arms, they moved along, towards Ullin the land of groves. Son-mor struck his shield, at times, the leader of the war.

"Far behind followed Sul-allin[l], over the streamy hills. She was a light on the mountain, when they crossed the vale below. Her steps were stately on the vale, when they rose on the mossy hill. She feared to approach the king, who left her in Atha of hinds. But

i Son-mor, 'tall handsome man.' He was the father of Borbar-duthul, chief of Atha, and grandfather to Cathmor himself.

k Cluan-er, 'man of the field.' This chief was killed in battle by Cormac Mac Conar, king of Ireland, the father of Ros-crana, the first wife of Fingal. The story is alluded to in other poems.

l Sull-alluin, 'beautiful eye,' the wife of Son-mor.

when the roar of battle rose; when host was rolled on host; when Son-mor burnt like the fire of heaven in clouds, with her spreading hair came Sul-allin; for she trembled for her king. He stopt the rushing strife, to save the love of heroes. The foe fled by night; Clunar slept without his blood; the blood which ought to be poured upon the warrior's tomb.

"Nor rose the rage of Son-mor, but his days were dark and slow. Sul-allin wandered, by her grey streams, with her tearful eyes. Often did she look, on the hero, when he was folded in his thoughts. But she shrunk from his eyes, and turned her lone step away. Battles rose like a tempest, and drove the mist from his soul. He beheld, with joy, her steps in the hall, and the white-rising of her hands on the harp."

In[m] his arms strode the chief of Atha, to where his shield hung, high, in night: high on a mossy bough, over Lubar's streamy roar. Seven bosses rose on the shield; the seven voices of the king, which his warriors received, from the wind, and marked over all their tribes.

On each boss is placed a star of night; Can-mathon with beams unshorn: Col-derna rising from a cloud: Uloicho robed in mist; and the soft beam of Cathlin glittering on a rock. Fair-gleaming, on its own blue wave, Reldurath half sinks its western light. The red eye of Berthin looks, through a grove, on the slow-moving hunter, as he returns through showery night with the spoils of the bounding roe. Wide in the midst, arose the cloudless beams of Ton-thena; Ton-thena, which looked, by night, on the course of the sea-tossed Larthon: Larthon, the first of Bolga's race who travelled on the winds[n]. White-bosomed spread the sails of the king, towards streamy Inis-fail; dun night was rolled before him, with its skirts of mist.

m To avoid multiplying notes, I shall give here the signification of the names of the stars engraved on the shield. Cean-mathon, 'head of the bear.' Col-derna, 'slant and sharp beam.' Ul-oicho, 'ruler of night.' Cathlin, 'beam of the wave.' Red-durath, 'star of the twilight.' Berthin, 'fire of the hill.' Ton-thena, 'meteor of the waves.' These etymologies, excepting that of Cean-mathon, are pretty exact. Of it I am not so certain; for it is not very probable that the Firbolg had distinguished a constellation so very early as the days of Larthon, by the name of the Bear.

n To travel on the winds, a poetical expression for sailing.

The winds were changeful in heaven, and rolled him rom wave to wave. Then rose the fiery-haired Tonhena, and laughed from her parted cloud. Larthon* ejoiced at the guiding beam, as it faint-gleamed on he tumbling waters.

Beneath the spear of Cathmor, awaked that voice vhich awakes the bards. They came, dark-winding, rom every side; each with the sound of his harp. Bepre them rejoiced the king, as the traveller, in the ay of the sun, when he hears, far rolling around, the nurmur of mossy streams; streams that burst in the esart, from the rock of roes.

"Why," said Fonar, "hear we the voice of the king, n the season of his rest? Were the dim forms of thy athers bending in thy dreams? Perhaps they stand on hat cloud, and wait for Fonar's song; often they come o the fields where their sons are to lift the spear. Or hall our voice arise for him who lifts the spear no nore; he that consumed the field, from Moma of the roves?"

"Not forgot is that cloud in war, bard of other imes. High shall his tomb rise on Moi-lena, the welling of renown. But now, roll back my soul to he times of my fathers: to the years when first they ose on Inis-huna's waves. Nor alone pleasant to Cathnor is the remembrance of wood-covered Lumon. umon the land of streams, the dwelling of whiteosomed maids."

* Larthon is compounded of Lear, 'sea,' and thon, 'wave.' This name was given the chief of the first colony of the Firbolg, who settled in Ireland, on account of his nowledge in navigation. A part of an old poem is still extant, concerning this hero. he author of it, probably, took the hint from the episode in this book, relating to the st discovery of Ireland by Larthon. It abounds with those romantic fables of giants d magicians, which distinguish the compositions of the less ancient bards. The desiptions contained in it, are ingenious and proportionable to the magnitude of the rsons introduced; but, being unnatural, they are insipid and tedious. Had the bard pt within the bounds of probability, his genius was far from being contemptible. The ordium of his poem is not destitute of merit; but it is the only part of it that I think orthy of being presented to the reader.

"Who first sent the black ship through the ocean, like a whale through the bursting of em? Look, from thy darkness, on Cronath, Ossian of the harps of old! Send thy ht on the blue-rolling waters, that I may behold the king. I see him dark in his n shell of oak! sea-tossed Larthon, thy soul is fire. It is careless as the wind of thy ls; as the wave that rolls by thy side. But the silent green isle is before thee, with sons, who are tall as woody Lumon; Lumon, which sends from its top a thousand reams, white wandering down its sides."

It may, perhaps, be for the credit of this bard, to translate no more of this poem, for e continuation of his description of the Irish giants betrays his want of judgment.

"Lumon[p] of foamy streams, thou risest on Fonar's soul! Thy son is on thy side, on the rocks of thy bending trees. The dun roe is seen from thy furze: the deer lifts his branchy head; for he sees, at times, the hound, on the half-covered heath. Slow, on the vale, are the steps of maids; the white-armed daughters of the bow: they lift their blue eyes to the hill, from amidst their wandering locks. Not there is the stride of Larthon, chief of Inis-huna. He mounts the wave on his own dark oak, in Cluba's ridgy bay: that oak which he cut from Lumon, to bound along the sea. The maids turn their eyes away, lest the king should be lowly laid; for never had they seen a ship, dark rider of the wave!

"Now he dares to call the winds, and to mix with the mist of ocean. Blue Inis-fail rose, in smoke: but dark-skirted night came down. The sons of Bolga feared. The fiery-haired Ton-thena rose. Culbin's bay received the ship, in the bosom of its echoing woods. There, issued a stream, from Duthuma's horrid cave; where spirits gleamed, at times, with their half-finished forms.

"Dreams descended on Larthon: he saw seven spirits of his fathers. He heard their half-formed words; and dimly beheld the times to come. He beheld the kings of Atha, the sons of future days. They led their hosts along the field, like ridges of mist, which winds pour, in Autumn, over Atha of the groves.

"Larthon raised the hall of Samla[q], to the soft sound of the harp. He went forth to the roes of Erin, to their wonted streams. Nor did he forget green-headed Lumon; he often bounded over his seas, to where white-handed Flathal[r] looked from the hill of roes. Lumon of the foamy streams, thou risest on Fonar's soul."

The beam awaked in the east. The misty heads of the mountains rose. Valleys show, on everyside, the

[p] Lumon, as I have remarked in a preceding note, was a hill in Inis-huna, near the residence of Sul-malla. This episode has an immediate connection with what is said of Larthon, in the description of Cathmor's shield.

[q] Samla, 'apparitions,' so called from the vision of Larthon, concerning his posterity.

[r] Flathal, 'heavenly, exquisitely beautiful.' She was the wife of Larthon.

grey winding of their streams. His host heard the shield of Cathmor: at once they rose around; like a crowded sea, when first it feels the wings of the wind. The waves know not whither to roll; they lift their troubled heads.

Sad and slow retired Sul-malla to Lona of the streams. She went and often turned: her blue eyes rolled in tears. But when she came to the rock that darkly covered Lona's vale, she looked from her bursting soul, on the king; and sunk, at once, behind.

Son[s] of Alpin strike the string. Is there aught of joy in the harp? Pour it then, on the soul of Ossian; it is folded in mist. I hear thee, O bard! in my night. But cease the lightly trembling sound. The joy of grief belongs to Ossian, amidst his dark-brown years.

Green thorn of the hill of ghosts, that shakest thy head to nightly winds! I hear no sound in thee; is there no spirit's windy skirt now rustling in thy leaves? Often are the steps of the dead in the dark-eddying blasts; when the moon, a dun shield from the east, is rolled along the sky.

Ullin, Carril, and Ryno, voices of the days of old! Let me hear you, in the darkness of Selma, and awake the soul of songs. I hear you not, ye children of music; in what hall of the clouds is your rest? Do you touch the shadowy harp, robed with morning mist, where the sun comes sounding forth from his green-headed waves?

s The original of this lyric ode is one of the most beautiful passages of the poem. The harmony and variety of its versification prove, that the knowledge of music was considerably advanced in the days of Ossian. See the specimen of the original.

TEMORA:

The Argument.

The fourth morning from the opening of the poem comes on. Fingal, still continuing in the place to which he had retired on the preceding night, is seen at interval through the mist which covered the rock of Cormul. The descent of the king is described. He orders Gaul, Dermid, and Carril the bard, to go to the valley of Cluna and conduct, from thence, to the Caledonian army, Ferad-artho, the son of Cairbar the only person remaining of the family of Conar, the first king of Ireland. The king takes the command of the army, and prepares for battle. Marching towards the enemy, he comes to the cave of Lubar, where the body of Fillan lay. Upon seeing his dog Bran, who lay at the entrance of the cave, his grief returns. Cathmor arranges the army of the Firbolg in order of battle. The appearance of that hero. The general conflict is described. The actions of Fingal and Cathmor. A storm. The total rout of the Firbolg. The two kings engage in a column of mist, on the banks of Lubar. Their attitude and conference after the combat. The death of Cathmor. Fingal resigns the spear of Trenmor to Ossian. The ceremonies observed on that occasion. The spirit of Cathmor appears to Sul-malla in the valley of Lona. Her sorrow. Evening comes on. A feast is prepared. The coming of Ferad-artho is announced by the songs of a hundred bards. The poem closes with a speech of Fingal.

BOOK VIII.

As when the wintry winds have seized the waves of the mountain-lake, have seized them, in stormy night and clothed them over with ice; white to the hunter's early eye, the billows still seem to roll. He turns his ear to the sound of each unequal ridge. But each is silent, gleaming, strewn with boughs and tufts of grass which shake and whistle to the wind, over their grey seats of frost. So silent shone to the morning the ridges of Morven's host, as each warrior looked up from his helmet towards the hill of the king; the cloud-covered hill of Fingal, where he strode, in the rolling of mist. At times is the hero seen, greatly dim in all his arms. From thought to thought rolled the war, along his mighty soul.

Now is the coming forth of the king. First appeared the sword of Luno; the spear half-issuing from a cloud; the shield still dim in mist. But when the stride of the king came abroad, with all his grey, dewy locks in

the wind; then rose the shouts of his host over every moving tribe. They gathered, gleaming, round, with all their echoing shields. So rise the green seas round a spirit that comes down from the squally wind. The traveller hears the sound afar, and lifts his head over the rock. He looks on the troubled bay, and thinks he dimly sees the form. The waves sport, unwieldy, round, with all their backs of foam.

Far distant stood the son of Morni, Duthno's race, and Cona's bard. We stood far distant; each beneath his tree. We shunned the eyes of the king; we had not conquered in the field. A little stream rolled at my feet: I touched its light wave, with my spear. I touched it with my spear; nor there was the soul of Ossian. It darkly rose, from thought to thought, and sent abroad the sigh.

"Son of Morni!" said the king, "Dermid, hunter of roes! why are ye dark, like two rocks, each with its trickling waters! No wrath gathers on the soul of Fingal against the chiefs of men. Ye are my strength in battle; the kindling of my joy in peace. My early voice was a pleasant gale to your ears, when Fillan prepared the bow. The son of Fingal is not here, nor yet the chase of the bounding roes. But why should the breakers of shields stand, darkened, far away?"

Tall they strode towards the king; they saw him turned to Mora's wind. His tears came down, for his blue-eyed son, who slept in the cave of streams. But he brightened before them, and spoke to the broad-shielded kings.

"Crommal, with woody rocks and misty top, the field of winds pours forth, to the sight, blue Lubar's streamy roar. Behind it rolls clear-winding Lavath, in the still vale of deer. A cave is dark in a rock; above it strong-winged eagles dwell; broad-headed oaks, before it, sound in Cluna's wind. Within his locks of youth, is Ferad-artho[w], blue-eyed king, the son of

[w] Ferad-artho was the son of Cairbar Mac-Cormac, king of Ireland. He was the only one remaining of the race of Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first Irish monarch, according to Ossian. In order to make this passage thoroughly understood, it may not be improper to recapitulate some part of what has been said in preceding notes. Upon

broad-shielded Cairbar, from Ullin of the roes. He listens to the voice of Condan, as grey, he bends in feeble light. He listens, for his foes dwell in the echoing halls of Temora. He comes, at times, abroad, in the skirts of mist, to pierce the bounding roes. When the sun looks on the field, nor by the rock nor stream is he! He shuns the race of Bolga, who dwell in his father's hall. Tell him, that Fingal lifts the spear, and that his foes, perhaps, may fail.

"Lift up, O Gaul! the shield before him. Stretch, Dermid, Temora's spear. Be thy voice in his ear, O Carril, with the deeds of his fathers. Lead him to green Moi-lena, to the dusky fields of ghosts; for there I fall forward in battle, in the folds of war. Before dur night descends, come to high Dun-mora's top. Look from the grey-rolling of mist, on Lena of the streams If there my standard shall float on wind, over Lubar's gleaming course; then has not Fingal failed in the las of his fields."

Such were his words: nor aught replied the silent striding kings. They looked side-long on Erin's host and darkened as they went. Never before had they left the king, in the midst of the stormy field. Behin

the death of Conar the son of Trenmor, his son Cormac succeeded on the Irish thron Cormac reigned long. His children were, Cairbar, who succeeded him, and Ros-cran the first wife of Fingal. Cairbar, long before the death of his father Cormac, had take to wife Bos-gala, the daughter of Colgar, one of the most powerful chiefs in Connaugh and had, by her, Artho, afterwards king of Ireland. Soon after Artho arrived man's estate, his mother, Bos-gala, died, and Cairbar took to wife Beltanno, th daughter of Conachar of Ullin, who brought him a son, whom he called Ferad-arth i. e. a man in the place of Artho. The occasion of the name was this. Artho, whe his brother was born, was absent on an expedition in the south of Ireland. A fal report was brought to his father that he was killed. Cairbar, to use the words of th poem on the subject, darkened for his fair-haired son. He turned to the young bea of light, the son of Beltanno of Conachar. Thou shalt be Ferad-artho, he said, a fi before thy race. Cairbar soon after died, nor did Artho long survive him. Artho w succeeded, in the Irish throne, by his son Cormac, who, in his minority, was murder by Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul. Ferad-artho, says tradition, was very your when the expedition of Fingal to settle him on the throne of Ireland, happened. D ring the short reign of young Cormac, Ferad-artho lived at the royal palace of Temo Upon the murder of the king, Condan, the bard, conveyed Ferad-artho privately to t cave of Cluna, behind the mountain of Crommal, in Ulster, where they both lived co cealed, during the usurpation of the family of Atha. All these particulars, concerni Ferad-artho, may be gathered from the compositions of Ossian: a bard, less ancie has delivered the whole history, in a poem just now in my possession. It has lit merit, if we except the scene between Ferad-artho and the messengers of Fingal, up their arrival in the valley of Cluna. After hearing of the great actions of Fingal, t young prince proposes the following questions concerning him to Gaul and Dorm "Is the king tall as the rock of my cave? Is his spear a fir of Cluna? Is he a rou winged blast on the mountain, which takes the green oak by the head, and tears from his hill? Glitters Lubar within his strides, when he sends his stately steps alor Nor is he tall, said Gaul, as that rock; nor glitter streams within his strides: but soul is a mighty flood, like the strength of Ullin's seas."

them, touching at times his harp, the grey-haired Carril moved. He foresaw the fall of the people, and mournful was the sound! It was like a breeze that comes, by fits, over Lego's reedy lake; when sleep half-descends on the hunter, within his mossy cave.

"Why bends the bard of Cona?" said Fingal, "over his secret stream? Is this a time for sorrow, father of low-laid Oscar? Be the warriors* remembered in peace; when echoing shields are heard no more. Bend then, in grief, over the flood, where blows the mountain-breeze. Let them pass on thy soul, the blue-eyed dwellers of Lena. But Erin rolls to war, wide-tumbling, rough, and dark. Lift, Ossian, lift the shield. I am alone, my son!"

As comes the sudden voice of winds to the becalmed ship of Inis-huna, and drives it large, along the deep, dark rider of the wave: so the voice of Fingal sent Ossian, tall, along the heath. He lifted high his shining shield, in the dusky wing of war: like the broad, blank moon, in the skirt of a cloud, before the storms arise.

Loud, from moss-covered Mora, poured down, at once, the broad-winged war. Fingal led his people forth, king of Morven of streams. On high spreads the eagle's wing. His grey hair is poured on his shoulders broad. In thunder are his mighty strides. He often stood, and saw behind, the wide-gleaming rolling of armour. A rock he seemed, grey over with ice, whose woods are high in wind. Bright streams leap from its head, and spread their foam on blasts.

* It is supposed Malvina speaks the following soliloquy: "Malvina is like the bow of the shower, in the secret valley of streams; it is bright, but the drops of heaven roll on its blended light. They say that I am fair within my locks; but on my brightness is the wandering of tears. Darkness flies over my soul, as the dusky wave of the breeze, along the grass of Lutha. Yet have not the roes failed me, when I moved between the hills. Pleasant, beneath my white hand, arose the sound of harps. What then, daughter of Lutha, travels over thy soul, like the dreary path of a ghost, along the nightly beam? Should the young warrior fall, in the roar of his troubled fields? Young virgins of Lutha, arise; call back the wandering thoughts of Malvina. Awake the voice of the harp, along my echoing vale. Then shall my soul come forth, like a light from the gates of the morn, when clouds are rolled around them with their broken sides

"Dweller of my thoughts, by night, whose form ascends in troubled fields, why dost thou stir up my soul, thou far distant son of the king? Is that the ship of my love, its dark course through the ridges of ocean? How art thou so sudden, Oscar, from the heath of shields."

The rest of this poem, it is said, consisted of a dialogue between Ullin and Malvina, wherein the distress of the latter is carried to the highest pitch.

Now he came to Lubar's cave, where Fillan darkly slept. Bran still lay on the broken shield: the eagle-wing is strewed on winds. Bright, from withered furze, looked forth the hero's spear. Then grief stirred the soul of the king, like whirlwinds blackening on a lake. He turned his sudden step, and leaned on his bending spear. White-breasted Bran came bounding with joy to the known path of Fingal. He came and looked towards the cave, where the blue-eyed hunter lay, for he was wont to stride, with morning, to the dewy bed of the roe. It was then the tears of the king came down, and all his soul was dark. But as the rising wind rolls away the storm of rain, and leaves the white streams to the sun, and high hills with their heads of grass: so the returning war brightened the mind of Fingal. He bounded *y*, on his spear, over Lubar, and struck his echoing shield. His ridgy host bend forward, at once, with all their pointed steel.

Nor Erin heard, with fear, the sound: wide they came rolling along. Dark Malthos, in the wing of war, looks forward from shaggy brows. Next rose that beam of light Hidalla; then the side-long-looking gloom of Maronnan. Blue-shielded Clonar lifts the spear; Cormar shakes his bushy locks on the wind. Slowly, from behind a rock, rose the bright form of Atha. First appeared his two pointed spears, then the half of his burnished shield: like the rising of a nightly meteor, over the vale of ghosts. But when he shone

y The Irish compositions concerning Fingal invariably speak of him as a giant. Of these Hibernian poems there are now many in my hands. From the language, and allusions to the times in which they were writ, I should fix the date of their composition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In some passages, the poetry is far from wanting merit, but the fable is unnatural; and the whole conduct of the pieces injudicious. I shall give one instance of the extravagant fictions of the Irish bards in a poem which they, most unjustly, ascribe to Ossian. The story of it is this. Ireland being threatened with an invasion from some part of Scandinavia, Fingal sent Ossian, Oscar, and Ca-olt to watch the bay, in which it was expected the enemy was to land. Oscar, unluckily, fell asleep, before the Scandinavians appeared; and great as he was, says the Irish bard, he had one bad property, that no less could waken him, before his time, than cutting off one of his fingers; or throwing a great stone against his head; and it was dangerous to come near him on these occasions, till he had recovered himself, and was fully awake. Ca-olt, who was employed by Ossian to waken his son, made choice of throwing a stone against his head, as the least dangerous expedient. The stone, rebounding from the hero's head, shook, as it rolled along, the hill for three miles round. Oscar rose in rage, fought bravely, and, singly, vanquished a wing of the enemy's army. Thus the bard goes on, till Fingal put an end to the war by the total rout of the Scandinavians. Puerile, and even despicable, as these fictions are, yet Keating and O'Flaherty have no better authority than the poems which contain them, for all that they write concerning Fion Mac-Comnal and the pretended militia of Ireland.

all abroad, the hosts plunged, at once, into strife. The gleaming waves of steel are poured on either side.

As meet two troubled seas, with the rolling of all their waves, when they feel the wings of contending winds, in the rock-sided frith of Lumon; along the echoing hills is the dim course of ghosts: from the blast fall the torn groves on the deep, amidst the foamy path of whales. So mixed the hosts! Now Fingal, now Cathmor came abroad. The dark tumbling of death is before them: the gleam of broken steel is rolled on their steps, as, loud, the high-bounding kings hewed down the ridge of shields.

Marronan fell, by Fingal, laid large across a stream. The waters gathered by his side, and leapt grey over his bossy shield. Clonar is pierced by Cathmor: nor yet lay the chief on earth. An oak seized his hair in his fall. His helmet rolled on the ground. By its thong, hung his broad shield; over it wandered his streaming blood. Tlamin* shall weep, in the hall, and strike her heaving breast. Nor did Ossian forget the spear, in the wing of his war. He strewed the field with dead. Young Hidalla came. "Soft voice of streamy Clonra! Why dost thou lift the steel? O that we met, in the strife of song, in thy own rushy vale!" Malthos beheld him low, and darkened as he rushed along. On either side of a stream, we bend in the echoing strife. Heaven comes rolling down: around burst

* Tla-min, 'mildly soft.' The loves of Clonar and Tlamin were rendered famous in the north, by the fragment of a lyric poem, still preserved, which is ascribed to Ossian. It is a dialogue between Clonar and Tlamin. She begins with a soliloquy, which he overhears,

Tlamin. "Clonar, son of Conglas of I-mor, young hunter of Dunsided roes! where art thou laid, amidst rushes, beneath the passing wing of the breeze? I behold thee, my love, in the plain of thy own dark streams? The clung thorn is rolled by the wind, and rustles along his shield. Bright in his locks he lies: the thoughts of his dreams fly, darkening, over his face. Thou thinkest of the battles of Ossian, young son of the echoing isle!

"Half-hid, in the grove, I sit down. Fly back ye mists of the hill. Why should ye hide her love from the blue eyes of Tlamin of harps?

Clonar. "As the spirit, seen in a dream, flies off from our opening eyes, we think we behold his bright path between the closing hills; so fled the daughter of Clun-gal, from the sight of Clonar of shields. Arise, from the gathering of trees; blue-eyed Tlamin arise.

Tlamin. "I turn me away from his steps. Why should he know of my love! My white breast is heaving over sighs, as foam on the dark course of streams. But he passes away, in his arms! Son of Conglas, my soul is sad.

Clonar. "It was the shield of Fingal! the voice of kings from Selma of harps! My path is towards green Erin. Arise, fair light, from thy shades. Come to the field of my soul, there is the spreading of hosts. Arise, on Clonar's troubled soul, young daughter of blue-shielded Clun-gal."

Clun-gal was the chief of I-mor, one of the Hebrides.

the voices of squally winds. Hills are clothed, at times, in fire. Thunder rolls in wreaths of mist. In darkness shrunk the foe: Morven's warriors stood aghast. Still I bent over the stream, amidst my whistling locks.

Then rose the voice of Fingal, and the sound of the flying foe. I saw the king, at times, in lightning, darkly striding in his might. I struck my echoing shield, and hung forward on the steps of Alnecma: the foe is rolled before me, like a wreath of smoke.

The sun looked forth from his cloud. The hundred streams of Moi-lena shone. Slow rose the blue columns of mist, against the glittering hill. "Where are the mighty kings?" [a] Nor by that stream, nor wood, are they! I hear the clang of arms! Their strife is in the bosom of mist. Such is the contending of spirits in a nightly cloud, when they strive for the wintry wings of winds, and the rolling of the foam-covered waves.

I rushed along. The grey mist rose. Tall, gleaming, they stood at Lubar. Cathmor leaned against a rock. His half fallen shield received the stream, that leapt from the moss above. Towards him is the stride of Fingal; he saw the hero's blood. His sword fell slowly to his side. He spoke, amidst his darkening joy.

"Yields the race of Borbar-duthul? Or still does he lift the spear? Not unheard is thy name, in Selma, in the green dwelling of strangers. It has come, like the breeze of his desart, to the ear of Fingal. Come to my hill of feasts: the mighty fail, at times. No fire am I to low-laid foes: I rejoice not over the fall of the brave. To close [b] the wound is mine: I have known the herbs

a Fingal and Cathmor. The conduct of the poet in this passage is remarkable. His numerous descriptions of single combats had already exhausted the subject. Nothing new, or adequate to our high idea of the kings, could be said. Ossian, therefore, throws a column of mist over the whole, and leaves the combat to the imagination of the reader. Poets have almost universally failed in their descriptions of this sort. Not all the strength of Homer could sustain with dignity, the minutiæ of a single combat. The throwing of a spear, and the braying of a shield, as some of our own poets most elegantly express it, convey no grand ideas. Our imagination stretches beyond, and consequently, despises the description. It were therefore, well for some poets, in my opinion, (though it is, perhaps, somewhat singular) to have, sometimes, like Ossian, thrown mist over their single combats.

b Fingal is very much celebrated, in tradition, for his knowledge in the virtues of herbs. The Irish poems concerning him, often represent him, curing the wounds which his chiefs received in battle. They fable concerning him, that he was in posses-

of the hills. I seized their fair heads on high, as they waved by their secret streams. Thou art dark and silent, king of Atha of strangers."

" By Atha of the streams," he said, " there rises a mossy rock. On its head is the wandering of boughs, within the course of winds. Dark, in its face, is a cave with its own loud rill. There have I heard the tread of strangers [c], when they passed to my hall of shells. Joy rose, like a flame, on my soul: I blest the echoing rock. Here be my dwelling in darkness, in my grassy vale. From this I shall mount the breeze, that pursues my thistle's beard; or look down on blue-winding Atha, from its wandering mist."

" Why speaks the king of the tomb? Ossian! the warrior has failed! Joy meet thy soul, like a stream, Cathmor, friend of strangers! My son, I hear the call of years: they take my spear as they pass along. Why does not Fingal, they seem to say, rest within his hall? Dost thou always delight in blood? In the tears of the sad? No: ye darkly-rolling years, Fingal delights not in blood. Tears are wintry streams, that waste away my soul. But when I lie down to rest, then comes the mighty voice of war. It wakes me in my hall, and calls forth all my steel. It shall call it forth no more; Ossian, take thou thy father's spear. Lift it in battle, when the proud arise.

" My fathers, Ossian, trace my steps; my deeds are pleasant to their eyes. Wherever I come forth to battle, on my field are their columns of mist. But mine arm rescued the feeble; the haughty found my rage was fire. Never, over the fallen, did mine eye rejoice.

sion of a cup, containing the essence of herbs, which instantaneously healed wounds. The knowledge of curing the wounded, was, till of late, universal among the Highlanders. We hear of no other disorder, which required the skill of physic. The wholesomness of the climate, and an active life, spent in hunting, excluded diseases.

c The hospitable disposition of Cathmor was unparalleled. He reflects, with pleasure, even in his last moments, on the relief he had afforded to strangers. The very tread of their feet was pleasant in his ear. His hospitality was not passed unnoticed by succeeding bards; for, with them, it became a proverb, when they described the hospitable disposition of a hero, that he was like Cathmor of Atha, the friend of strangers. It will seem strange, that, in all the Irish traditions, there is no mention made of Cathmor. This must be attributed to the revolutions and domestic confusions that happened in that island, and utterly cut off all the real traditions concerning so ancient a period. All that we have related of the state of Ireland before the fifth century, is of late invention, and the work of ill-informed senachies, and injudicious bards.

For this [d] my fathers shall meet me, at the gates of their airy halls, tall, with robes of light, with mildly-kindled eyes. But, to the proud in arms, they are darkened moons in heaven, which send the fire of night, red-wandering over their face.

" Father of heroes, Trenmor, dweller of eddying winds! I give thy spear to Ossian, let thine eye rejoice. Thee have I seen, at times, bright from between thy clouds; so appear to my son, when he is to lift the spear: then shall he remember thy mighty deeds, tho' thou art now but a blast."

He gave the spear to my hand, and raised, at once, a stone on high, to speak to future times, with its grey head of moss. Beneath he placed a sword [e] in earth, and one bright boss from his shield. Dark in thought, awhile, he bends: his words, at length, came forth.

" When thou, O stone, shall moulder down, and lose thee, in the moss of years, then shall the traveller come, and whistling pass away. Thou knowest not, feeble wanderer, that fame once shone on Moi-lena. Here Fingal resigned his spear, after the last of his fields. Pass away, thou empty shade; in thy voice there is no renown. Thou dwellest by some peaceful stream; yet a few years and thou art gone. No one remembers thee, thou dweller of thick mist! But Fingal shall be clothed with fame, a beam of light to other times; for he went forth, in echoing steel, to save the weak in arms."

Brightening in his fame, the king strode to Lubar's sounding oak, where it bent, from its rock, over the bright tumbling stream. Beneath it is a narrow plain, and the sound of the fount of the rock. Here the stand-

d We see from this passage, that even in the times of Ossian, and, consequently, before the introduction of Christianity, they had some idea of rewards and punishments after death. Those who behaved, in life, with bravery and virtue, were received with joy, to the airy halls of their fathers: but the dark in soul, to use the expression of the poet, were spurned away from the habitation of heroes, to wander on all the winds. Another opinion which prevailed in those times, tended not a little to make individuals emulous to excel one another in martial achievements. It was thought, that in the hall of clouds, every one had a seat, raised above others, in proportion as he excelled them in valour when he lived.

e There are some stones still to be seen in the north, which were erected as memorials of some remarkable transactions between the ancient chiefs. There are generally found beneath them some piece of arms, and a bit of half burnt wood. The cause of placing the last there, is not mentioned in tradition.

ard [f] of Morven poured its wreaths on the wind, to mark the way of Ferad-artho from his secret vale. Bright, from his parted west, the sun of heaven looked abroad. The hero saw his people, and heard their shouts of joy. In broken ridges round, they glittered to the beam. The king rejoiced as a hunter in his own green vale, when, after the storm is rolled away, he sees the gleaming sides of the rocks. The green thorn shakes its head in their face; from their top look forward the roes.

Grey [g], at his mossy cave, is bent the aged form of Clonmal. The eyes of the bard had failed. He leaned forward, on his staff. Bright in her locks, before him, Sul-malla listened to the tale; the tale of the kings of Atha, in the days of old. The noise of battle had ceased in his ear: he stopt, and raised the secret sigh. The spirits of the dead, they said, often lightened over his soul. He saw the king of Atha low, beneath his bending tree.

"Why art thou dark?" said the maid. "The strife of arms is past. Soon [b] shall he come to thy cave, over thy winding streams. The sun looks from the rocks of the west. The mists of the lake arise. Grey, they spread on that hill, the rushy dwelling of roes. From the mist shall my king appear! Behold, he comes, in his arms. Come to the cave of Clonmal, O my best beloved!"

It was the spirit of Cathmor, stalking, large, a gleaming form. He sunk by the hollow stream, that roared between the hills. "It was but the hunter," she said, "who searches for the bed of the roe. His steps are not forth to war; his spouse expects him with night. He shall, whistling, return, with the spoils of the dark-

[f] The erecting of his standard on the banks of Lubar, was the signal which Fingal, in the beginning of the book promised, to give to the chiefs, who went to conduct Ferad-artho to the army, should he himself prevail in battle. This standard here, (and in every other part of Ossian's poems, where it is mentioned) is called the sun-beam. The reason of this appellation is given, more than once, in notes preceding.

[g] The poet changes the scene to the valley of Lona, whither Sul-malla had been sent, by Cathmor, before the battle. Clonmal, an aged bard, or rather druid, as he seems here to be endued with a pre-science of events, had long dwelt there, in a cave. This scene is awful and solemn, and calculated to throw a melancholy gloom over the mind.

[b] Cathmor had promised, in the seventh book, to come to the cave of Clonmal, after the battle was over.

brown hinds." Her eyes are turned to the hill; again the stately form came down. She rose in the midst of joy. He retired in mist. Gradual vanish his limbs of smoke, and mix with the mountain-wind. Then she knew that he fell! "King of Erin art thou low!" Let Ossian forget her grief; it wastes the soul of age *i*.

Evening came down on Moi-lena. Grey rolled the streams of the land. Loud came forth the voice of Fingal: the beam of oaks arose, the people gathered round with gladness; with gladness blended with shades. They side-long looked to the king and beheld his unfinished joy. Pleasant, from the way of the desart, the voice of music came. It seemed, at first, the noise of a stream, far distant on its rocks. Slow it rolled along the hill like the ruffled wing of a breeze, when it takes the tufted beard of the rocks, in the still season of night. It was the voice of Condan, mixed with Carril's trembling harp. They came with blue-eyed Ferad-artho, to Mora of the streams.

Sudden bursts the song from our bards, on Lena: the host struck their shields midst the sound. Gladness rose brightening on the king, like the beam of a cloudy day, when it rises on the green hill, before the roar of winds. He struck the bossy shield of kings; at once they cease around. The people lean forward, from their spears, towards the voice of their land *k*.

i Tradition relates, that Ossian, the next day after the decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor, went to find out Sul-malla in the valley of Lona. His address to her, which is still preserved, I here lay before the reader.

"Awake, thou daughter of Con-mor, from the feru-skirted cavern of Lona. Awake, thou sun-beam in desarts; warriors one day must fail. They move forth, like terrible lights; but, often, their cloud is near. Go to the valley of streams, to the wandering of herds on Lumon; there dwells, in his lazy mist, the man of many days. But he is unknown, Sul-malla, like the thistle of the rocks of roes: it shakes its grey beard in the wind, and falls unseen of our eyes. Not such are the kings of men, their departure is a meteor of fire, which pours its red course from the desart, over the bosom of night.

"He is mixed with the warriors of old, those sires that have hid their heads. At times shall they come forth in song. Not forgot has the warrior failed. He has not seen, Sul-malla, the fall of a beam of his own: no fair-haired son, in his blood, young troubler of the field. I am lonely, young branch of Lumon, I may hear the voice of the feeble, when my strength shall have failed in years, for young Oscar has ceased on his field."

k Before I finish my notes, it may not be altogether improper to obviate an objection which may be made to the credibility of the story of Temora, as related by Ossian. It may be asked, whether it is probable that Fingal could perform such actions as are ascribed to him in this book, at an age when his grandson Oscar had acquired so much reputation in arms. To this it may be answered, that Fingal was but very young, Book IV. when he took to wife Ros-crana, who soon after became the mother of Ossian. Ossian was also extremely young when he married Evir-allin the mother of Oscar

" Sons of Morven spread the feast; send the night away on song. Ye have shone around me, and the dark storm is past. My people are the windy rocks, from which I spread my eagle's wings, when I rush forth to renown, and seize it on its field. Ossian, thou hast the spear of Fingal: it is not the staff of a boy with which he strews the thistle round, young wanderer of the field. No: it is the lance of the mighty, with which they stretched forth their hands to death. Look to thy fathers, my son; they are awful beams. With morning lead Ferad-artho forth to the echoing halls of Temora. Remind him of the kings of Erin: the stately forms of old. Let not the fallen be forgot; they were mighty in the field. Let Carril pour his song, that the kings may rejoice in their mist. To-morrow I spread my sails to Selma's shaded walls; where streamy Duthula winds through the seats of roes."

Tradition relates, that Fingal was but eighteen years old at the birth of his son Ossian; and that Ossian was much about the same age, when Oscar his son was born. Oscar, perhaps, might be about twenty, when he was killed, in the battle of Gabhra, (Book I.) so the age of Fingal, when the decisive battle was fought between him and Cathmor, was just fifty-six years. In those times of activity and health, the natural strength and vigour of a man was little abated, at such an age; so that there is nothing improbable in the actions of Fingal, as related in this book.

CATHLIN OF CLUTHA.

A POEM.

The Argument.

An address to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar. The poet relates the arrival of Cathlin in Selma, to solicit aid against Duth-carmor of Cluba, who had killed Cathmol, for the sake of his daughter Lanul. Fingal declining to make a choice among his heroes, who were all claiming the command of the expedition: they retired each to his hill of ghosts; to be determined by dreams. The spirit of Trenmor appears to Ossian and Oscar: they sail from the bay of Carmona, and, on the fourth day, appear off the valley of Rath-col, in Inis-huna, where Duth-carmor had fixed his residence. Ossian dispatches a bard to Duth-carmor to demand battle. Night comes on. The distress of Cathlin of Clutha. Ossian devolves the command on Oscar, who, according to the custom of the kings of Morven, before battle, retired to a neighbouring hill. Upon the coming on of day, the battle joins. Oscar and Duth-carmor meet. The latter falls. Oscar carries the mail and helmet of Duth-carmor to Cathlin, who had retired from the field. Cathlin is discovered to be the daughter of Cathmol, in disguise, who had been carried off by force by, and made her escape from, Duth-carmor.

COME [a], thou beam that art lonely, from watching in the night! The squally winds are around thee, from all their echoing hills. Red, over my hundred streams, are the light-covered paths of the dead. They rejoice, on the eddying winds, in the still season of night. Dwells there no joy in song, white hand of the harps of Lutha? Awake the voice of the string, and roll my soul to me. It is a stream that has failed. Malvina, pour the song.

a The traditions, which accompany this poem, inform us, that both it, and the succeeding piece, went, of old, under the name of Laoi-Oi-lutha; i. e. 'the hymns of the maid of Lutha.' They pretend also to fix the time of its composition to the third year after the death of Fingal; that is, during the expedition of Fergus the son of Fingal, to the banks of Uisca duthon. In support of this opinion, the Highland senachie have prefixed to this poem, an address of Ossian, to Congal the young son of Fergus which I have rejected, as having no manner of connexion with the rest of the piece It has poetical merit; and, probably it was the opening of one of Ossian's other poems though the bards injudiciously transferred it to the piece now before us.

"Congal, son of Fergus of Durath, thou light between thy locks, ascend to the rock of Selma, to the oak of the breaker of shields. Look over the bosom of night it is streaked with the reds path of the dead· look on the night of ghosts, and kindle O Congal, thy soul. Be not, like the moon on a stream, lonely in the midst of clouds darkness closes around it; and the beam departs. Depart not, son of Fergus, ere thou markest the field with thy sword. Ascend to the rock of Selma; to the oak of the breaker of shields."

I hear thee, from thy darkness, in Selma, thou that watchest, lonely, by night! Why didst thou with-hold the song, from Ossian's failing soul? As the falling brook to the ear of the hunter, descending from his storm covered hill; a sun-beam rolls the echoing stream; he hears, and shakes his dewy locks: such is the voice of Lutha, to the friend of the spirits of heroes. My swelling bosom beats high. I look back on the days that are past. Come, thou beam that art lonely from the watching of night.

In the echoing bay of Carmona[b] we saw, one day, the bounding ship. On high, hung a broken shield; it was marked with wandering blood. Forward came a youth, in armour, and stretched his pointless spear. Long, over his tearful eyes, hung loose his disordered locks. Fingal gave the shell of kings. The words of the stranger arose.

"In his hall lies Cathmol of Clutha, by the winding of his own dark streams. Duth-carmor saw white-bosomed Lanul[c], and pierced her father's side. In the rushy desart were my steps. He fled in the season of night. Give thine aid to Cathlin to revenge his father. I sought thee not as a beam in a land of clouds. Thou, like the sun, art known, king of echoing Selma."

Selma's king looked around.. In his presence, we rose in arms. But who should lift the shield? for all had claimed the war. The night came down; we

b Carmona, 'bay of the dark-brown hills', an arm of the sea in the neighbourhood of Selma. In this paragraph are mentioned the signals presented to Fingal, by those who came to demand his aid. The suppliants held, in one hand, a shield covered with blood, and, in the other, a broken spear; the first a symbol of the death of their friends, the last an emblem of their own helpless situation If the king chose to grant succours, which generally was the case, he reached to them the shell of feasts, as a token of his hospitality, and friendly intentions towards them

It may not be disagreeable to the reader to lay here before him the ceremony of the Cran-tara, which was of a similar nature, and, till very lately, used in the Highlands. When the news of an enemy came to the residence of the chief, he immediately killed a goat with his own sword, dipped the end of an half-burnt piece of wood in the blood, and gave it to one of his servants, to be carried to the next hamlet. From hamlet to hamlet this tessera was carried with the utmost expedition, and in the space of a few hours the whole clan were in arms, and convened in an appointed place: the name of which was the only word which accompanied the delivery of the Cran-tara. This symbol was the manifesto of the chief, by which he threatened fire and sword to those of his clan, that did not immediately appear at his standard.

c Lanul, 'full eyed,' a surname which, according to tradition, was bestowed on the daughter of Cathmol, on account of her beauty: this tradition, however, may have been founded on that partiality which the bards have shown to Cathlin of Clutha; for, according to them, no falsehood could dwell in the soul of the lovely.

strode, in silence ; each to his hill of ghosts : that spirits might descend in our dreams, to mark us for the field.

We struck the shield of the dead, and raised the hum of songs. We thrice called the ghosts of our fathers. We laid us down in dreams. Trenmor came, before mine eyes, the tall form of other years. His blue hosts were behind him in half-distinguished rows. Scarce seen is their strife in mist, or their stretching forward to deaths. I listened ; but no sound was there. The forms were empty wind.

I started from the dreams of ghosts. On a sudden blast flew my whistling hair. Low-sounding, in the oak, is the departure of the dead. I took my shield from its bough. Onward came the rattling of steel. It was Oscar [d] of Lego. He had seen his fathers.

" As rushes forth the blast, on the bosom of whitening waves ; so careless shall my course be through ocean, to the dwelling of foes. I have seen the dead, my father. My beating soul is high. My fame is bright before me, like the streak of light on a cloud, when the broad sun comes forth, red traveller of the sky."

" Grandson of Branno," I said ; " not Oscar alone shall meet the foe. I rush forward, through ocean, to the woody dwelling of heroes. Let us contend, my son, like eagles, from one rock ; when they lift their broad wings, against the stream of winds." We raised our sails in Carmona. From three ships, they marked my shield on the wave, as I looked on nightly Ton-thena [e] red wanderer between the clouds. Four days came the breeze abroad. Lumon came forward in mist.

d Oscar is here called Oscar of Lego, from his mother being the daughter of Branno, a powerful chief, on the banks of that lake. It is remarkable that Ossian addresses no poem to Malvina, in which her lover Oscar was not one of the principal actors. His attention to her, after the death of his son, shows that delicacy of sentiment is not confined, as some fondly imagine, to our own polished times.

e Ton-thena, ' fire of the wave,' was that remarkable star, which, as has been mentioned in the seventh book of Temora, directed the course of Larthon to Ireland. It seems to have been well known to those who sailed on that sea which divides Ireland from South Britain. As the course of Ossian was along the coast of Inis-huna, he mentions with propriety, that star which directed the voyage of the colony from that country to Ireland.

In winds were its hundred groves. Sun-beams marked, at times, its brown side. White, leapt the foamy streams from all its echoing rocks.

A green field, in the bosom of hills, winds silent with its own blue stream. Here, midst the waving of oaks, were the dwellings of kings of old. But silence, for many dark-brown years, had settled in grassy Rathcol[f], for the race of heroes had failed, along the pleasant vale. Duth-carmor was here with his people, dark rider of the wave. Ton-thena had hid her head in the sky. He bound his white-bosomed sails. His course is on the hills of Rath-col, to the seats of roes.

We came. I sent the bard, with songs, to call the foe to fight. Duth-carmor heard him with joy. The king's soul was a beam of fire: a beam of fire, marked with smoke, rushing, varied, through the bosom of night. The deeds of Duth-carmor were dark, though his arm was strong.

Night came, with the gathering of clouds; by the beam of the oak we sat down. At a distance stood Cathlin of Clutha. I saw the changing soul of the stranger[g]. As shadows fly over the fields of grass, so various is Cathlin's cheek. It was fair, within locks, that rose on Rathcol's wind. I did not rush, amidst his soul, with my words. I bade the song to rise.

"Oscar of Lego," I said, "be thine the secret hill[h], to-night strike the shield, like Morven's kings. With

f Rath-col, 'woody field,' does not appear to have been the residence of Duth-carmor; he seems rather to have been forced thither by a storm; at least I should think that to be the meaning of the poet, from his expression, that Ton-thena had hid her head, and that he bound his white-bosomed sails; which is as much as to say, that the weather was stormy, and that Duth-carmor put into the bay of Rathcol for shelter.

g From this circumstance, succeeding bards feigned that Cathlin, who is here in the disguise of a young warrior, had fallen in love with Duth-carmor at a feast, to which he had been invited by her father. Her love was converted into detestation for him, after he had murdered her father. But as those rainbows of heaven are changeful, say my authors, speaking of women, she felt the return of her former passion, upon the approach of Duth-carmor's danger. I myself, who think more favourably of the sex, must attribute the agitation of Cathlin's mind to her extreme sensibility of the injuries done her by Duth-carmor; and this opinion is favoured by the sequel of the story.

h This passage alludes to the well-known custom among the ancient kings of Scotland, to retire from their army on the night preceding a battle. The story which Ossian introduces in the next paragraph, concerns the fall of the druids, of which I have given some account in the Dissertation. It is said in many old poems, that the druids, in the extremity of their affairs, had solicited, and obtained, aid from Scandinavia. Among the auxiliaries there came many pretended magicians, which circumstance Ossian alludes to, in his description of the son of Loda. Magic and incantation could not, however, prevail: for Trenmor, assisted by the valour of his son Trathal, entirely broke the power of the druids.

day, thou shalt lead in war. From my rock, I shall see thee, Oscar, a dreadful form ascending in fight, like the appearance of ghosts, amidst the storms they raise. Why should mine eyes return to the dim times of old, ere yet the song had bursted forth, like the sudden rising of winds. But the years that are past are marked with mighty deeds. As the nightly rider of waves looks up to Ton-thena of beams: so let us turn our eyes to Trenmor, the father of kings."

Wide, in Carracha's echoing field, Carmal had poured his tribes. They were a dark ridge of waves; the grey-haired bards were like moving foam on their face. They kindled the strife around, with their red-rolling eyes. Nor alone were the dwellers of rocks; a son of Loda was there; a voice in his own dark land, to call the ghosts from high. On his hill, he had dwelt, in Lochlin, in the midst of a leafless grove. Five stones lifted, near, their heads. Loud-roared his rushing stream. He often raised his voice to winds, when meteors marked their nightly wings; when the dark-crusted moon was rolled behind her hill.

Nor unheard of ghosts was he! They came with the sound of eagle-wings. They turned battle, in fields, before the kings of men.

But Trenmor they turned not from battle; he drew forward the troubled war; in its dark skirt was Trathal, like a rising light. It was dark; and Loda's son poured forth his signs, on night. The feeble were not before thee, son of other lands!.

Then i rose the strife of kings, about the hill of night; but it was soft as two summer gales, shaking their light wings on a lake. Trenmor yielded to his son; for the fame of the king was heard. Trathal came forth before his father, and the foes failed in echoing Caracha. The years that are past, my son, are marked with mighty deeds k.

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i Trenmor and Trathal. Ossian introduced this episode, as an example to his son, from ancient times.

k Those who deliver down this poem in tradition, lament that there is a great part of it lost. In particular, they regret the loss of an episode, which was here introduced, with the sequel of the story of Carmal and his druids. Their attachment to it, was founded on the descriptions of magical inchantments which it contained.

In clouds rose the eastern light. The foe came forth in arms. The strife is mixed at Rath-col, like the roar of streams. Behold the contending of kings! They meet beside the oak. In gleams of steel, the dark forms are lost; such is the meeting of meteors, in a vale by night: red light is scattered round, and men foresee the storm. Duth carmor is low in blood. The son of Ossian overcame. Not harmless in battle was he, Malvina, hand of harps!

Nor, in the fields, are the steps of Cathlin. The stranger stood by a secret stream, where the foam of Rathcol skirted the mossy stones. Above, bends the branchy birch, and strews its leaves on winds. The inverted spear of Cathlin touched, at times, the stream. Oscar brought Duth-carmor's mail: his helmet with its eagle-wing. He placed them before the stranger, and his words were heard. "The foes of thy father have failed. They are laid in the field of ghosts. Renown returns to Morven, like a rising wind. Why art thou dark, chief of Clutha! is there cause for grief?"

"Son of Ossian of harps, my soul is darkly sad. I behold the arms of Cathmol, which he raised in war. Take the mail of Cathlin, place it high in Selma's hall; that thou mayest remember the hapless in thy distant land."

From white breasts descended the mail. It was the race of kings; the soft-handed daughter of Cathmol at the streams of Clutha. Duth-carmor saw her bright in the hall, he came, by night, to Clutha. Cathmol met him, in battle, but the warrior fell. Three days dwelt the foe with the maid. On the fourth she fled in arms. She remembered the race of kings, and felt her bursting soul.

Why, maid of Toscar of Lutha, should I tell how Cathlin failed? Her tomb is at rushy Lumon, in a distant land. Near it were the steps of Sul-malla, in the days of grief. She raised the song, for the daughter of strangers, and touched the mournful harp.

Come, from the watching of night, Malvina, lonely beam!

SUL-MALLA OF LUMON:

A POEM.

The Argument.

This poem, which, properly speaking, is a continuation of the last, opens with an address to Sul-malla, the daughter of the king of Inis-huna, whom Ossian met at the chase, as he returned from the battle of Rathcol. Sul-malla invites Ossian and Oscar to a feast, at the residence of her father, who was then absent in the wars. Upon hearing their name and family, she relates an expedition of Fingal into Inis-huna She casually mentioning Cathmor, chief of Atha, (who then assisted her father against his enemies,) Ossian introduces the episode of Cul-gorm and Suran-dronlo, two Scandinavian kings, in whose wars Ossian himself and Cathmor were engaged on opposite sides. The story is imperfect, a part of the original being lost. Ossian, warned in a dream, by the ghost of Trenmor, sets sail from Inis-huna.

Who [a] moves so stately, on Lumon, at the roar of the foamy waters? Her hair falls upon her heaving breast. White is her arm behind, as slow she bends the bow. Why dost thou wander in desarts, like a light through a cloudy field? The young roes are panting, by their secret rocks. Return, thou daughter of kings; he cloudy night is near.

It was the young branch of Lumon, Sul-malla of blue eyes. She sent the bard from her rock, to bid us to her feast. Amidst the song we sat down, in Conmor's echoing hall. White moved the hands of Sul-

a The expedition of Ossian to Inis-huna happened a short time before Fingal passed over into Ireland to dethrone Cairbar the son of Borbar-duthul. Cathmor the brother of Cairbar, was aiding Conmor, king of Inis-huna, in the wars, at the time that Ossian defeated Duth-carmor, in the valley of Rath-col. The poem is more interesting, that it contains so many particulars concerning those personages who make so great a figure in Temora.

The exact correspondence in the manners and customs of Inis-huna, as here described, to those of Caledonia, leaves no room to doubt, that the inhabitants of both were originally the same people. Some may allege, that Ossian might transfer, in his poetical descriptions, the manners of his own nation to foreigners. The objection is easily answered; for had Ossian used that freedom in this passage, there is no reason why he should paint the manners of the Scandinavians so different from those of the Caledonians. We find, however, the former very different in their customs and superstitions from the nations of Britain and Ireland The Scandinavian manners are remarkably barbarous and fierce, and seem to mark out a nation much less advanced in civil society, than the inhabitants of Britain were in the times of Ossian.

malla, on the trembling strings. Half-heard, amidst the sound, was the name of Atha's king: he that was absent in battle for her own green land. Nor absent from her soul was he: he came midst her thoughts by night: Ton-thena looked in, from the sky, and saw her tossing arms.

The sound of the shell had ceased. Amidst long locks, Sul-malla rose. She spoke, with bended eyes, and asked of our course through seas, "for of the kings of men are ye, tall riders of the wave[b]." "Not unknown," I said, "at his streams is he, the father of our race. Fingal has been heard of at Cluba, blue-eyed daughter of kings. Nor only, at Cona's stream, is Ossian and Oscar known. Foes trembled at our voice, and shrunk in other lands."

"Not unmarked," said the maid, "by Sul-malla, is the shield of Morven's king. It hangs high, in Conmor's hall, in memory of the past; when Fingal came to Cluba, in the days of other years. Loud roared the boar of Culdarnu, in the midst of his rocks and woods. Inis-huna sent her youths, but they failed; and virgins wept over tombs. Careless went the king to Culdarnu. On his spear rolled the strength of the woods. He was bright, they said, in his locks, the first of mortal men. Nor at the feast were heard his words. His deeds passed from his soul of fire, like the rolling of vapours from the face of the wandering sun. Not careless looked the blue-eyes of Cluba on his stately steps. In white bosoms rose the king of Selma, in midst of their thoughts by night. But the winds bore the stranger to the echoing vales of his roes. Nor lost to other lands was he, like a meteor that sinks in

b Sul-malla here discovers the quality of Ossian and Oscar from their stature and stately gait. Among nations not far advanced in civilization, a superior beauty and stateliness of person were inseparable from nobility of blood. It was from these qualities, that those of family were known by strangers, not from tawdry trappings of state injudiciously thrown round them. The cause of this distinguishing property, must, in some measure, be ascribed to their unmixed blood. They had no inducement to intermarry with the vulgar: and no low notions of interest made them deviate from their choice, in their own sphere. In states where luxury has been long established, I am told, that beauty of person is by no means the characteristic of antiquity of family. This must be attributed to those enervating vices, which are inseparable from luxury and wealth. A great family, (to alter a little the words of the historian, it is true,) like a river, becomes considerable from the length of its course, but, as it rolls on, hereditary distempers, as well as property, flow successively into it.

a cloud. He came forth, at times, in his brightness, to the distant dwelling of foes. His fame came, like the sound of winds, to Cluba's woody vale[c].

"Darkness dwells in Cluba of harps: the race of kings is distant far; in battle is Con-mor of spears; and Lormor[d] king of streams. Nor darkened alone are they; a beam, from other lands, is nigh: the friend[e] of strangers in Atha, the troubler of the field. High, from their misty hill look forth the blue eyes of Erin, for he is far away, young dweller of their souls. Nor, harmless, white hands of Erin! is he in the skirts of war; he rolls ten thousand before him, in his distant field."

"Not unseen by Ossian," I said, "rushed Cathmor from his streams, when he poured his strength on I-thorno[f], isle of many waves. In strife met two kings in I-thorno, Culgorm and Suran-dronlo: each from his echoing isle, stern hunters of the boar!

"They met a boar, at a foamy stream: each pierced it with his steel. They strove for the fame of the deed: and gloomy battle rose. From isle to isle they sent a spear, broken, and stained with blood, to call

c Too partial to our own times, we are ready to mark our remote antiquity, as the region of ignorance and barbarism. This, perhaps, is extending our prejudices too far. It has been long remarked, that knowledge, in a great measure, is founded on a free intercourse with mankind: and that the mind is enlarged in proportion to the observations it has made upon the manners of different men and nations. If we look, with attention, into the history of Fingal, as delivered by Ossian, we shall find, that he was not altogether a poor ignorant hunter, confined to the narrow corner of an island. His expeditions to all parts of Scandinavia, to the north of Germany, and the different states of Great Britain and Ireland, were very numerous, and performed under such a character, and at such times, as gave him an opportunity to mark the undisguised manners of mankind. War, and an active life, as they call forth, by turns, all the powers of the soul, present to us the different characters of men: in times of peace and quiet, for want of objects to exert them, the powers of the mind lie concealed, in a great measure, and we see only artificial passions and manners. It is from this consideration I conclude, that a traveller of penetration could gather more genuine knowledge from a tour of ancient Gaul, than from the minutest observation of all the artificial manners, and elegant refinements of modern France.

d Lormor was the son of Con-mor, and the brother of Sul-malla. After the death of Con-mor, Lormor succeeded him in the throne.

e Cathmor, the son of Borbar-duthul. It would appear, from the partiality with which Sul-malla speaks of that hero, that she had seen him previous to his joining her father's army: though tradition positively asserts, that it was after his return that she fell in love with him.

f I-thorno, says tradition, was an island of Scandinavia. In it, at a hunting party, met Culgorm and Suran-dronlo, the kings of two neighbouring isles. They differed about the honour of killing a boar; and a war was kindled between them. From this episode we may learn, that the manners of the Scandinavians were much more savage and cruel than those of Britain. It is remarkable, that the names, introduced in this story, are not of Gaelic original, which circumstance affords room to suppose, that it had its foundation in true history.

the friends of their fathers, in their sounding arms. Cathmor came from Bolga, to Culgorm, red-eyed king: I aided Suran-dronlo, in his land of boars."

"We rushed on either side of a stream, which roared through a blasted heath. High broken rocks were round, with all their bending trees. Near are two circles of Loda, with the stone of power; where spirits descended, by night, in dark-red streams of fire. There, mixed with the murmur of waters, rose the voice of aged men, they called the forms of night, to aid them in their war.

"Heedless[g] I stood with my people, where fell the foamy stream from rocks. The moon moved red from the mountain. My song, at times, arose. Dark on the other side, young Cathmor heard my voice; for he lay, beneath the oak, in all his gleaming arms. Morning came; we rushed to fight: from wing to wing in the rolling of strife. They fell, like the thistle head, beneath autumnal winds.

"In armour came a stately form: I mixed my strokes with the king. By turns our shields are pierced: loud rung our steely mails. His helmet fell to the grouud. In brightness shone the foe. His eyes, two pleasant flames, rolled between his wandering locks. I knew the king of Atha, and threw my spear on earth. Dark, we turned, and silent passed to mix with other foes.

Not so passed the striving kings[b]. They mixed in echoing frav; like the meeting of ghosts, in the dark wing of winds. Through either breast rushed the spears; nor yet lay the foes on earth. A rock received their fall; and half reclined they lay in death. Each held the lock of his foe; and grimly seemed to roll his eyes. The stream of the rock leapt on their shields, and mixed below with blood.

g From the circumstance of Ossian not being present at the rites, described in the preceding paragraph, we may suppose that he held them in contempt. This difference of sentiment, with regard to religion, is a sort of argument, that the Caledonians were not originally a colony of Scandinavians, as some have imagined. Concerning so remote a period, mere conjecture must supply the place of argument and positive proofs.

b Culgorm and Suran-dronlo. The combat of the kings, and their attitude in death, are highly picturesque, and expressive of that ferocity of manners, which distinguished the northern nations.

" The battle ceased in I-thorno. The strangers met in peace : Cathmor, from Atha of streams, and Ossian, king of harps. We placed the dead in earth. Our steps were by Runar's bay. With the bounding boat, afar, advanced a ridgy wave. Dark was the rider of seas, but a beam of light was there, like the ray of the sun, in Stromlo's rolling smoke. It was the daughter† of Suran-dronlo, wild in brightened looks. Her eyes were wandering flames, amidst disordered locks, Forward is her white arm, with the spear ; her high heaving breast is seen, white as foamy waves, that rise, by turns, amidst rocks. They are beautiful, but they are terrible, and mariners call the winds."

" Come, ye dwellers of Loda ! Carchar, pale in the midst of clouds ! Sluthmor, that strides t in airy halls ! Corchtur, terrible in winds ! Receive, from his daughter's spear, the foes of Suran-dronlo.

" No shadow, at his roaring streams ; no mildly-looking form was he ! When he took up his spear, the hawks shook their sounding wings : for blood was poured around the steps of dark-eyed Suran-dronlo.

" He lighted me, no harmless beam, to glitter on his streams. Like meteors I was bright, but I blasted the foes of Suran-dronlo."——— * * * * * * *

Not unconcerned heard Sul-malla the praise of Cathmor of shields. He was within her soul, like a fire in secret heath, which awakes at the voice of the blast

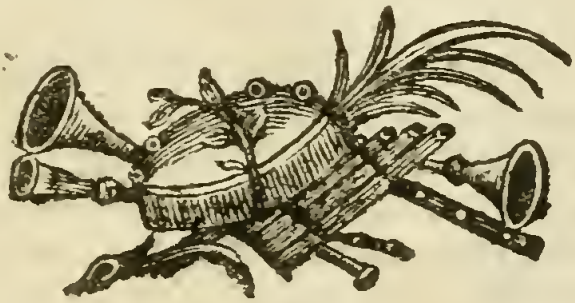
† Tradition has handed down the name of this princess. The bards call her Runo Forlo, which has no other sort of title for being genuine, but its not being of Gaelic o riginal : a distinction, which the bards had not the art to preserve, when they feigne names for foreigners. The Highland senachies, who very often endeavoured to suppl the deficiency they thought they found in the tales of Ossian, have given us the con tinuation of the story of the daughter of Suran-dronlo. The catastrophe is so unnatu ral, and the circumstances of it so ridiculously pompous, that, for the sake of the inven tors, I shall conceal them.

The wildly beautiful appearance of Runo-forlo, made a deep impression on a chie some ages ago, who was himself no contemptible poet. The story is romantic, but no incredible, if we make allowance for the imagination of a man of genius. Our chie sailing, in a storm, along one of the islands of Orkney, saw a woman in a boat, near th shore, whom he thought, as he expresses it himself, ' as beautiful as a sudden ray of th sun on the dark-heaving deep.' The verses of Ossian, on the attitude of Runo-forlo which was so similar to that of the woman in the boat, wrought so much on his fanc that he fell desperately in love. The winds, however, drove him from the coast, an after a few days he arrived at his residence in Scotland. There his passion increased t such a degree, that two of his friends, fearing the consequence, sailed to the Orkneys to carry to him the object of his desire. Upon enquiry, they soon found the nymp and carried her to the enamoured chief; but mark his surprise, when, instead of a ra of the sun,' he saw a skinny fisher-woman, more than middle-aged, appearing befo him. Tradition here ends the story ; but it may be easily supposed that the passion the chief soon subsided.

and sends its beam abroad. Amidst the song removed the daughter of kings, like the soft sound of a summer-breeze; when it lifts the heads of flowers, and curls the lakes and streams,

By night came a dream to Ossian, without form stood the shadow of Trenmor. He seemed to strike the dim shield, on Selma's streamy rock. I rose, in my rattling steel; I knew that war was near. Before the winds our sails were spread; when Lumon showed its streams to the morn.

Come from the watching of night, Malvina, lonely beam!



CATH-LODA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Fingal, in one of his voyages to the Orkney islands, was driven, by stress of weather, into a bay of Scandinavia, near the residence of Starno, king of Lochlin. Starno invites Fingal to a feast. Fingal, doubting the faith of the king, and mindful of his former breach of hospitality, (Fingal, B. III.) refuses to go. Starno gathers together his tribes; Fingal resolves to defend himself. Night coming on, Duth-maruno proposes to Fingal, to observe the motions of the enemy. The king himself undertakes the watch. Advancing towards the enemy, he, accidently, comes to the cave of Turthor, where Starno had confined Conban-carglas, the captive daughter of a neighbouring chief. Her story is imperfect, a part of the original being lost. Fingal comes to a place of worship, where Starno, and his son Swaran, consulted the spirit of Loda, concerning the issue of the war. The rencounter of Fingal and Swaran. The Duan concludes with a description of the airy hall of Cruthloda, supposed to be the Odin of Scandinavia.

DUAN[a] FIRST.

A TALE of the times of old! Why, thou wanderer unseen, that bendest the thistle of Lora, why, thou breeze of the valley, hast thou left mine ear? I hear no distant roar of streams, no sound of the harp from the rocks! Come, thou huntress of Lutha, send back his soul to the bard.

I look forward to Lochlin of lakes, to the dark ridgy bay of U-thorno, where Fingal descended from ocean, from the roar of winds. Few are the heroes of Morven, in a land unknown! Starno sent a dweller of Loda, to

[a] The bards distinguished those compositions, in which the narration is often interrupted by episodes and apostrophes, by the name of Duan. Since the extinction of the order of the bards, it has been a general name for all ancient compositions in verse. The abrupt manner in which the story of this poem begins, may render it obscure to some readers; it may not therefore be improper, to give here the traditional preface, which is generally prefixed to it. Two years after he took to wife Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac, king of Ireland, Fingal undertook an expedition into Orkney, to visit his friend Cath-ulla, king of Inistore. After staying a few days at Carric-thura, the residence of Cath-ulla, the king set sail, to return to Scotland, but a voilent storm arising, his ships were driven into a bay of Scandinavia, near Gormal, the seat of Starno, king of Lochlin, his avowed enemy. Starno, upon the appearance of strangers on his coast, summoned together the neighbouring tribes, and advanced, in a hostile manner, towards the bay of U-thorno, where Fingal had taken shelter. Upon discovering who the strangers were, and fearing the valour of Fingal, which he had, more than once, experienced before, he resolved to accomplish by treachery, what he was afraid he should fail in by open force. He invited, therefore, Fingal to a feast at which he intended to assassinate him. The king prudently declined to go, and Starno betook himself to arms. The sequel of the story may be learned from the poem itself.

bid Fingal to the feast: but the king remembered the past, and all his rage arose.

" Nor Gormal's mossy towers, nor Starno, shall Fingal behold. Deaths wander, like shadows, over his fiery soul. Do I forget that beam of light, the white-handed daughter [b] of kings? Go, son of Loda, his words are but blasts to Fingal: blasts, that, to and fro, roll the thistles in autumnal vales.

" Duth-maruno[c], arm of death! Cromma-glas, of iron shields! Sruthmor, dweller of battle's wing! Cormar, whose ships bound on seas, careless as the course of a meteor, on dark-streaming clouds! arise around me, children of heroes, in a land unknown. Let each look on his shield, like Trenmor, the ruler of battles. " Come down," said the king, " thou dweller between the harps. Thou shalt roll this stream away, or dwell with me in earth."

Around him they rose in wrath. No words came forth: they seized their spears. Each soul is rolled into itself. At length, the sudden clang is waked, on all their echoing shields. Each took his hill; by night, at intervals, they darkly stood. Unequal burst the hum of songs, between the roaring wind. Broad over them rose the moon. In his arms, came tall Duth-maruno; he from Croma-charn of rocks, stern hunter of the boar. In his dark boat he rose on waves, when Crum-thormoth [d] awaked its woods. In the chase he shone, among his foes: No fear was thine, Duth-maruno.

" Son of Comhal," he said, " my steps shall be forward through night. From this shield I shall view them, o-

b Agandecca, the daughter of Starno, whom her father killed, on account of her discovering to Fingal a plot laid against his life. Her story is related at large, in the third book of Fingal.

c Duth-maruno is a name very famous in tradition. Many of his great actions are handed down, but the poems which contained the detail of them, are long since lost. He lived, it is supposed, in that part of the north of Scotland, which is over against Orkney. Duth-maruno, Cromma-glas, Struthmor, and Cormar, are mentioned as attending Comhal, in his last battle against the tribe of Morni, in a poem which is still preserved. It is not the work of Ossian, the phraseology betrays it to be a modern composition. It is something like the trivial compositions, which the Irish bards forged under the name of Ossian, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Duth-maruno signifies ' black and steady,' Cromma-glas, ' bending and swarthy: Struth-mor, ' roaring stream;' Cormar, ' expert at sea.'

d Crumthormoth, one of the Orkney or Shetland islands. The name is not of Gaelic original. It was subject to its own petty king, who is mentioned in one of Ossian's poems.

ver their gleaming tribes. Starno, of lakes, is before me, and Swaran, the foe of strangers. Their words are not in vain, by Loda's stone of power. If Duth-maruno returns not, his spouse is lonely, at home, where meet two roaring streams, on Crathmo-craulo's plain. Around are hills, with their woods; the ocean is rolling near. My son looks on screaming sea-fowl, young wanderer of the field. Give the head of a boar to Candona [e], tell him of his father's joy, when the bristly strength of I-thorno rolled on his lifted spear."

"Not forgetting my fathers," said Fingal, "I have bounded over ridgy seas; theirs were the times of danger in the days of old. Nor gathers darkness on me, before foes, though I am young in my locks. Chief of Crathmo-craulo, the field of night is mine."

He rushed, in all his arms, wide-bounding over Turthor's stream, that sent its sullen roar, by night, through Gormal's misty vale. A moon-beam glittered on a rock; in the midst stood a stately form; a form with floating locks, like Lochlin's white-bosomed maid. Unequal are her steps, and short: she throws a broken song on wind. At times, she tosses her white arms: for grief is in her soul.

"Torcul-torno [e] of aged locks! where now are thy steps, by Lulan? thou hast failed, at thine own dark streams, father of Conban-carglas! But I behold thee, chief of Lulan, sporting by Loda's hall, when the dark-skirted night is poured along the sky.

e Cean-dona, 'head of the people,' the son of Duth-maruno. He became afterwards famous, in the expeditions of Ossian, after the death of Fingal. The traditional tales concerning him are numerous, and, from the epithet in them, be towed on him (Candona of boars) it would appear, that he applied himself to that kind of hunting, which his father, in this paragraph, is so anxious to recommend to him. As I have mentioned the traditional tales of the Highlands, it may not be improper here, to give some account of them. After the expulsion of the bards from the houses of the chiefs, they, being an indolent race of men, owed all their subsistence to the generosity of the vulgar, whom they diverted with repeating the compositions of their predecessors, and running up the genealogies of their entertainers to the family of their chiefs. As this subject was, however, soon exhausted, they were obliged to have recourse to invention, and form stories, having no foundation in fact, which were swallowed, with great credulity, by an ignorant multitude. By frequent repeating, the fable grew upon their hands, and as each threw in whatever circumstance he thought conductive to raise the admiration of his hearers, the story became, at last, so devoid of all probability that even the vulgar themselves did not believe it. They, however, liked the tales so well, that the bards found their advantage in turning professed tale-makers. They then launched out into the wildest regions of fiction and romance. I firmly believe there are

Thou, sometimes, hidest the moon, with thy shield. I have seen her dim in heaven, thou kindlest thy hair into meteors, and sailest along the night. Why am I forgot in my cave, king of shaggy boars? Look from the hall of Loda, on lonely Conban-carglas."

"Who art thou," said Fingal, "voice of night?" She trembling, turned away. "Who art thou, in thy darkness?" She shrunk into the cave. The king loosed the thong from her hands: he asked about her fathers.

"Torcul-torno," she said, "once dwelt at Lulan's foamy stream: he dwelt—but, now, in Loda's hall, he shakes the sounding shell. He met Starno of Lochlin, in battle; long fought the dark-eyed kings. My father fell, at length, blue-shielded Torcul-torno.

"By a rock, at Lulan's stream, I had pierced the bounding roe. My white hand gathered my hair from off the stream of winds. I heard a noise. Mine eyes were up. My soft breast rose on high. My step was forward, at Lulan, to meet thee, Torcul-torno!

"It was Starno, dreadful king! His red eyes rolled on Conban-carglas. Dark waved his shaggy brow, above his gathered smile. Where is my father, I said, he that was mighty in war? Thou art left alone among foes, daughter of Torcul-torno!

more stories of giants, inchanted castles, dwarfs, and palfreys, in the Highlands, than in any country in Europe. These tales, it is certain, like other romantic compositions, have many things in them unnatural, and, consequently, disgustful to true taste; but, I know not how it happens, they command attention more than any other fictions I ever met with. The extreme length of these pieces is very surprising, some of them requiring many days to repeat them; but such hold they take of the memory, that few circumstances are ever omitted by those who have received them only from oral tradition. What is more amazing, the very language of the bards is still preserved. It is curious to see, that the descriptions of magnificence, introduced in these tales, are even superior to all the pompous oriental fictions of the kind.

e Torcul-torno, according to tradition, was king of Crathlun, a district in Sweden. The river Lulan ran near the residence of Torcul-turno. There is a river in Sweden, still called Lula, which is probably the same with Lulan. The war between Starno and Torcul-torno, which terminated in the death of the latter, had its rise at a hunting party. Starno being invited, in a friendly manner, by Torcul-torno, both kings, with their followers, went to the mountain of Stivamor, to hunt. A boar rushed from the wood before the kings, and Torcul-torno killed it. Starno thought this behaviour a breach upon the privilege of guests, who were always honoured, as tradition expresses it, with the danger of the chase. A quarrel arose, the kings came to battle, with all their attendants, and the party of Torcul-torno were totally defeated, and he himself slain. Starno pursued his victory, laid waste the district of Crathlun, and coming to the residence of Torcul-torno, carried off, by force, Conban-carglas, the beautiful daughter of his enemy. Her he confined in a cave, near the palace of Gormal, where, on account of his cruel treatment, she became distracted.

The paragraph just now before us, is the song of Conban-carglas, at the time she was discovered by Fingal. It is in lyric measure, and set to music, which is wild and simple, and so inimitably suited to the situation of the unhappy lady, that few can hear it without tears.

" He took my hand. He raised the sail. In this cave he placed me, dark. At times, he comes, a gathered mist. He lifts, before me, my father's shield. Often passes a beam [g] of youth, far-distant from my cave. He dwells lonely in the soul of the daughter of Torcul-torno."

" Maid of Lulan," said Fingal, " white-handed Conban-carglas; a cloud, marked with streaks of fire, is rolled along thy soul. Look not to that dark-robed moon; nor yet to those meteors of heaven: my gleaming steel is around thee, daughter of Torcul-torno.

" It is not the steel of the feeble, nor of the dark in soul. The maids are not shut in our [b] caves of streams; nor tossing their white arms alone. They bend, fair within their locks, above the harps of Selma. Their voice is not in the desart wild, young light of Torcul-torno."

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Fingal, again, advanced his steps, wide through the bosom of night, to where the trees of Loda shook amid squally winds. Three stones, with heads of moss, are there: a stream with foaming course; and dreadful, rolled around them, is the dark-red cloud of Loda. From its top looked forward a ghost, half-formed of the shadowy smoke. He poured his voice, at times, amidst the roaring stream. Near, bending beneath a blasted tree, two heroes received his words: Swaran of lakes, and Starno foe of strangers. On their dun shields, they darkly leaned: their spears are forward in night. Shrill sounds the blast of darkness, in Starno's floating beard.

They heard the tread of Fingal. The warriors rose in arms. " Swaran, lay that wanderer low," said Starno, in his pride. " Take the shield of thy father; it is a rock in war." Swaran threw his gleaming spear;

g By the beam of youth, it afterwards appears, that Conban-carglas means Swaran the son of Starno, with whom, during her confinement, she had fallen in love.

b From this contrast, which Fingal draws, between his own nation and the inhabitants of Scandinavia, we may learn that the former were much less barbarous than the latter. This distinction is so much observed throughout the poems of Ossian, that there can be no doubt, that he followed the real manners of both nations in his own time. At the close of the speech of Fingal there is a great part of the original lost.

it stood fixed in Loda's tree. Then came the foes forward, with swords. They mixed their rattling steel. Through the thongs of Swaran's shield rushed the blade of Luno [i]. The shield fell rolling on earth. Cleft the helmet [k] fell down. Fingal stopt the lifted steel. Wrathful stood Swaran unarmed. He rolled his silent eyes, and threw his sword on earth. Then, slowly stalking over the stream, he whistled as he went.

Nor unseen of his father is Swaran. Starno turned away in wrath. His shaggy brows waved dark above his gathered rage. He struck Loda's tree, with his spear: he raised the hum of songs. They came to the host of Lochlin, each in his own dark path; like two foam-covered streams, from two rainy vales.

To Tuthor's plain Fingal returned. Fair rose the beam of the east. It shone on the spoils of Lochlin in the hand of the king. From her cave, came forth, in her beauty, the daughter of Torcul-torno. She gathered her hair from wind; and wildly raised her song. The song of Lulan of shells, where once her father dwelt.

She saw Starno's bloody shield. Gladness rose, a light on her face. She saw the cleft helmet of Swaran [l]; she shrunk, darkened, from the king. "Art thou fallen, by thy hundred streams, O love of Conban-carglas [l]!"

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U-thorno, that risest in waters; on whose side are the meteors of night! I behold the dark moon descending behind thy echoing woods. On thy top dwells the misty Loda, the house of the spirits of men. In the end of his cloudy hall bends forward Cruth-loda of

i The sword of Fingal, so called from its maker, Luno of Lochlin.

k The helmet of Swaran. The behaviour of Fingal is always consistent with that generosity of spirit which belongs to a hero. He takes no advantage of a foe disarmed.

l Conban-carglas, from seeing the helmet of Swaran bloody in the hands of Fingal, conjectured that that hero was killed. A part of the original is lost. It appears, however, from the sequel of the poem, that the daughter of Torcul-torno did not long survive her surprise, occasioned by the supposed death of her lover. The description of the airy hall of Loda (which is supposed to be the same with that of Odin, the deity of Scandinavia) is more picturesque and descriptive, than any in the Edda, or other works of the northern Scalders.

swords. His form is dimly seen amidst his wavy mist. His right-hand is on his shield: in his left is the half-viewless shell. The roof of his dreadful hall is marked with nightly fires.

The race of Cruth-loda advance, a ridge of formless shades. He reaches the sounding shell to those who shone in war; but, between him and the feeble, his shield rises, a crust of darkness. He is a setting meteor to the weak in arms. Bright, as a rain-bow on streams, came white-armed Conban-carglas.

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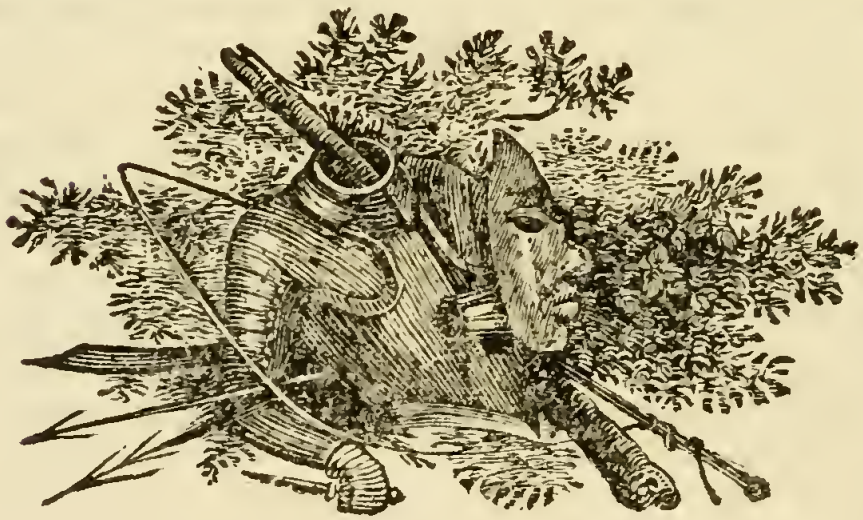

CATH-LODA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Fingal, returning with day, devolves the command of the army on Duth-maruno, who engages the enemy, and drives them over the stream of Turthor. Fingal, after recalling his people, congratulates Duth-maruno on his success, but discovers that that hero was mortally wounded in the engagement. Duth-maruno dies. Ullin, the bard, in honour of the dead, introduces the episode of Colgorm and Strina-dona, with which the Duan concludes.

DUAN SECOND.

" WHERE art thou, son of the king?" said dark-haired Duth-maruno. " Where hast thou failed, young beam of Selma? He returns not from the bosom of night! Morning is spread on U-thorno: in his mist is the sun, on his hill. Warriors, lift the shields in my presence. He must not fall, like a fire from heaven, whose place is not marked on the ground. He comes like an eagle, from the skirt of his squally wind! In his hand are the spoils of foes. King of Selma, our souls were sad."

" Near us are the foes, Duth-maruno. They come forward, like waves in mist, when their foamy tops are seen, at times, above the low-sailing vapour. The traveller shrinks on his journey, and knows not whither to fly. No trembling travellers are we! Sons of heroes call forth the steel. Shall the sword of Fingal arise, or shall a warrior lead?"

The [a] deeds of old, said Duth-maruno, are like paths to our eyes, O Fingal! Broad-shielded Trenmor is still

a In this short episode we have a very probable account given us, of the origin of monarchy in Caledonia. The Celt, or Gauls, who possessed the countries to the north of the Frith of Edinburgh, were, originally, a number of distinct tribes, or clans, each subject to its own chief, who was free and independent of any other power. When the Romans invaded them, the common danger might, perhaps, have induced

seen, amidst his own dim years. Nor feeble was the soul of the king. There, no dark deed wandered in secret. From their hundred streams came the tribes, to grassy Colglan-crona. Their chiefs were before them. Each strove to lead the war. Their swords were often half-unsheathed. Red rolled their eyes of rage. Separate they stood, and hummed their surly songs. " Why should they yield to each other? their fathers were equal in war."

Trenmor was there with his people, stately in youthful locks. He saw the advancing foe. The grief of his soul arose. He bade the chiefs, to lead, by turns: they led, but they were rolled away. From his own mossy hill, blue-shielded Trenmor came down. He led wide-skirted battle, and the strangers failed. Around him the dark-browed warriors came: they struck the shield of joy. Like a pleasant gale, the words of power rushed forth from Selma of kings. But the chiefs led, by turns, in war, till mighty danger rose: then was the hour of the king to conquer in the field.

" Not unknown," said Cromma-glas [b] of shields, " are the deeds of our fathers, but who shall now lead the

those reguli to join together; but, as they were unwilling to yield to the command of one of their own number, their battles were ill-conducted, and, consequently unsuccessful. Trenmor was the first who represented to the chiefs, the bad consequences of carrying on their wars in this irregular manner, and advised, that they themselves should alternately lead in battle. They did so, but they were unsuccessful. When it came to Trenmor's turn, he totally defeated the enemy, by his superior valour and conduct, which gained him such an interest among the tribes, that he, and his family after him, were regarded as kings; or, to use the poet's expression, " the words of power rushed forth from Selma of kings." The regal authority, however, except in time of war, was but inconsiderable; for every chief within his own district, was absolute and independent. From the scene of the battle in this episode, which was in the valley of Crona, a little to the north of Agricola's wall, I should suppose that the enemies of the Caledonians were the Romans, or provincial Britons.

b In tradition, this Cromma-glas makes a great figure in that battle which Comhal lost, together with his life, to the tribe of Morni. I have just now in my hands, an Irish composition, of a very modern date, as appears from the language, in which all the traditions concerning that decisive engagement are jumbled together, In justice to the merit of the poem, I should have here presented to the reader a translation of it, did not the bard mention some circumstances very ridiculous, and others altogether indecent. Morna, the wife of Comhal, had a principal hand in all the transactions, previous to the death and defeat of her husband; she, to use the words of the bard, " who was the guiding star of the women of Erin." The bard, it is to be hoped, misrepresented the ladies of his country, for Morna's behaviour, was, according to him, so void of all decency and virtue, that it cannot be supposed, they had chosen her for their guiding star. The poem consists of many stanzas. The language is figurative, and the numbers harmonious; but the piece is so full of anachronisms, and so unequal in its composition, that the author, most undoubtedly, was either mad, or drunk, when he wrote it. It is worthy of being remarked, that Comhal is, in this poem, very often called, Comhal na h' Albin, or Comhal of Albion. Which sufficiently demonstrates, that the allegations of Keating and O'Flaherty, concerning Fion MacComnal, are but of late invention.

war, before the race of kings? Mist settles on these four dark hills: within it let each warrior strike his shield. Spirits may descend in darkness, and mark us for the war." They went, each to his hill of mist. Bards marked the sounds of the shields. Loudest rung thy boss, Duth-maruno. Thou must lead in war.

Like the murmur of waters, the race of U-thorno came down. Starno led the battle, and Swaran of stormy isles. They looked forward from iron shields, like Cruth-loda, fiery-eyed, when he looks from behind the darkened moon, and strews his signs on night.

The foes met by Turtho's stream. They heaved like ridgy waves. Their echoing strokes are mixed. Shadowy death flies over the hosts. They were clouds of hail, with squally winds in their skirts. Their showers are roaring together. Below them swells the dark-rolling deep.

Strife of gloomy U-thorno, why should I mark thy wounds? Thou art with the years that are gone: thou fadest on my soul. Starno brought forward his skirt of war, and Swaran his own dark wing. Nor a harmless fire is Duth-maruno's sword. Lochlin is rolled over her streams. The wrathful kings are folded in thoughts. They roll their silent eyes, over the flight of their land. The horn of Fingal was heard, the sons of woody Albion returned. But many lay, by Tuthor's stream, silent in their blood.

"Chief of Crom-charn," said the king, "Duth-maruno, hunter of boars! not harmless returns my eagle, from the field of foes. For this white-bosomed Lanal shall brighten, at her streams; Can-dona shall rejoice, at rocky Crathmo-craulo."

"Colgorm[c]," replied the chief, "was the first of my race in Albion; Colgorm, the rider of ocean, through its

c The family of Duth-maruno, it appears, came originally from Scandinavia, or at least, from some of the northern isles, subject in chief to the kings of Lochlin. The Highland senachies, who never missed to make their comments on, and additions to the works of Ossian, have given us a long list of the ancestors of Duth-maruno, and a particular account of their actions, many of which are of the marvellous kind. One of the tale-makers of the north has chosen for his hero, Starnmor, the father of Duth-maruno, and considering the adventures through which he has led him, the piece is neither disagreeable, nor abounding with that kind of fiction which shocks credibility.

watery vales. He slew his brother in I-thorno : he left the land of his fathers. He chose his place, in silence, by rocky Crathmo-craulo. His race came forth, in their years ; they came forth to war, but they always fell. The wound of my fathers is mine, king of echoing isles !"

He drew an arrow from his side. He fell, pale, in a land unknown. His soul came forth to his fathers, to their stormy isle. There, they pursued boars of mists, along the skirts of winds. The chiefs stood silent around, as the stones of Loda, on their hill. The traveller sees them through the twilight, from his lonely path. He thinks them the ghosts of the aged, forming future wars.

Night came down on U-thorno. Still stood the chiefs in their grief. The blast, hissed, by turns, through every warrior's hair. Fingal, at length, burst-ed forth from the thoughts of his soul. He called Ullin of harps, and bade the song to rise. No falling fire, that is only seen, and then retires in night ; no departing meteor was Crathmo-craulo's chief. He was like the strong-beaming sun, long rejoicing on his hill. Call the names of his fathers, from their dwellings of old.

I-thorno [d], said the bard, that risest midst ridgy seas ! Why is thy head so gloomy, in the ocean's mist ? From thy vales, came forth a race, fearless as thy strong-winged eagles; the race of Colgorm of iron shields, dwellers of Loda's hall.

In Tormoth's resounding isle, arose Lurthan, streamy hill. It bent its woody head above a silent vale. There, at foamy Cruruth's source, dwelt Rurmar, hunter of boars. His daughter was fair as a sun-beam, white-bosomed Strina-dona !

d This episode, is in the original extremely beautiful. It is set to that wild kind of music, which some of the Highlanders distinguish, by the title of ' Fon Oi-marra, or the song of Mermaids.' Some part of the air is absolutely infernal, but there are many returns in the measure, which are inexpressibly wild and beautiful. From the genius of the music, I should think it came originally from Scandinavia, for the fictions delivered down concerning the Oi-marra, who are reputed the authors of the music, exactly correspond with the notions of the northern nations, concerning their diræ, or goddesses of death. Of all the names in this episode, there is none of a Gaelic original, except Strina-dona, which signifies, the strife of heroes.

Many a king of heroes, and hero of iron shields, many a youth of heavy locks, came to Rurmar's echoing hall. They came to woo the maid, the stately huntress of Tormoth wild. But thou lookest careless from thy steps, high-bosomed Strina-dona!

If on the heath she moved, her breast was whiter than the down of Cana[e]; if on the sea-beat shore, than the foam of the rolling ocean. Her eyes were two stars of light; her face was heaven's bow in showers; her dark hair flowed round it, like the streaming clouds. Thou wert the dweller of souls white-handed Strina-dona!

Col-gorm came in his ship, and Corcul-suran, king of shells. The brothers came from I-thorno, to woo the sun-beam of Tormoth's isle. She saw them in their echoing steel. Her soul was fixed on blue-eyed Col-gorm. Ul-lochlin's[f] nightly eye looked in, and saw the tossing arms of Strina-dona.

Wrathful the brothers frowned. Their flaming eyes in silence met. They turned away. They struck their shields. Their hands were trembling on their swords. They rushed into the strife of heroes, for long-haired Strina dona.

Corcul-suran fell in blood. On his isle, raged the strength of his father. He turned Col-gorm from I-thorno, to wander on all the winds. In Crathmor-craulo's rocky field, he dwelt, by a foreign stream. Nor darkened the king alone, that beam of light was near, the daughter of echoing Tormoth, white-armed Strina-dona[g].

e The Cana is a certain kind of grass, which grows plentifully in the heathy morasses of the north. Its stalk is of a reedy kind, and it carries a tuft of down very much resembling cotton. It is excessively white, and, consequently, often introduced by the bards, in their similies concerning the beauty of women.

f Ul-lochlin, the guide to Lochlin; the name of a star.

g The continuation of this episode is just now in my hands: but the language is so different from, and the ideas so unworthy of Ossian that I have rejected it, as an interpolation by a modern bard.

CATH-LODA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Ossian, after some general reflections, describes the situation of Fingal, and the position of the army of Lochlin. The conversation of Starno and Swaran. The episode of Cromar-trunar and Fornar-bragal. Starno, from his own example, recommends to Swaran, to surprise Fingal, who had retired alone to a neighbouring hill. Upon Swaran's refusal, Starno undertakes the enterprise himself; is overcome, and taken prisoner, by Fingal. He is dismissed, after a severe reprimand for his cruelty.

DUAN THIRD.

WHENCE is the stream of years? Whither do they roll along? Where have they hid, in mist, their many coloured sides? I look into the times of old, but they seem dim to Ossian's eyes, like reflected moon-beams, on a distant lake. Here rise the red beams of war! There, silent, dwells a feeble race! They mark no years with their deeds, as slow they pass along. Dweller between the shields; thou that awakest the failing soul, descend from thy wall, harp of Cona, with thy voices three! Come with that which kindles the past: rear the forms of old, on their dark-brown years!

U-thorna *a*, hill of storms, I behold thy race on thy

a The bards, who were always ready to supply what they thought deficient in the poems of Ossian, have inserted a great many incidents between the second and third Duan of Cath-loda. Their interpolations are so easily distinguished from the genuine remains of Ossian, that it took me very little time to mark them out, and totally to reject them. If the modern Scots and Irish bards, have shown any judgment, it is in ascribing their own compositions to names of antiquity; for, by that means, they themselves have escaped that contempt, which the authors of such futile performances must necessarily have met with, from people of a true taste. I was led into this observation, by an Irish poem just now before me. It concerns a descent made by Swaran, king of Lochlin, and is the work, says the traditional preface prefixed to it, of Ossian Mac-Fion. It however appears, from several pious ejaculations, that it was rather the composition of some good priest in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, for he speaks, with great devotion, of pilgrimage, and, more particularly, of the blue-eyed daughters of the convent. Religious, however, as this poet was, he was not altogether decent, in the scenes he introduces between Swaran and the wife of Congeullion, both of whom he represents as giants. It happening, unfortunately, that Congeullion was only of a moderate stature, his wife, without hesitation, preferred Swaran, as a more adequate match

side. Fingal is bending, in night, over Duth-maruno's tomb. Near him are the steps of his heroes, hunters of the boar. By Turthor's stream the host of Lochlin is deep in shades. The wrathful kings stood on two hills; they looked forward from their bossy shields. They looked forward on the stars of night, red-wandering in the west. Cruth-loda bends from high, like a formless meteor in clouds. He sends abroad the winds, and marks them, with his signs. Starno foresaw, that Morven's king was never to yield in war.

He twice struck the tree in wrath. He rushed before his son. He hummed a surly song; and heard his hair in the wind. Turned from one another, they stood, like two oaks which different trees had bent; each hangs over its own loud rill, and shakes its boughs, in the course of blasts.

" Annir," said Starno of lakes, " was a fire that consumed of old. He poured death from his eyes, along the striving fields. His joy was in the fall of men. Blood to him was a summer stream, that brings joy to withered vales, from its own mossy rock. He came forth to the lake Luth-cormo, to meet the tall Corman-trunar, he from Urlor of streams, dweller of battle's wing."

The chief of Urlor had come to Cormul with his dark-bosomed ships; he saw the daughter of Annir, white-armed Foinar-bragal. He saw her: nor careless rolled her eyes, on the rider of stormy waves. She fled to his ship in darkness, like a moon-beam through a nightly vale. Annir pursued along the deep; he called the winds of heaven. Nor alone was the king; Starno was by his side. Like U-thorno's young eagle, I turned my eyes on my father.

We came to roaring Urlor. With his people came tall Corman-trunar. We fought; but the foe prevailed. In his wrath stood Annir of lakes. He lopped the young trees with his sword. His eyes rolled red in his rage. I marked the soul of the king, and I retired

for her own gigantic size. From the fatal preference proceeded so much mischief, that the good poet altogether lost sight of his principal action, and he ends the piece, with an advice to men, in the choice of their wives, which, however good it may be, I shall leave concealed in the obscurity of the original.

in night. From the field I took a broken helmet: a shield that was pierced with steel: pointless was the spear in my hand, I went to find the foe.

On a rock sat tall Corman-trunar, beside his burning oak, and near him, beneath a tree, sat deep-bosomed Fionar-bragal. I threw my broken shield before her; and spoke the words of peace. Beside his rolling sea, lies Annir of many lakes. The king was pierced in battle; and Starno is to raise his tomb. Me, a son of Loda, he sends to white-handed Foinar-bragal, to bid her send a lock from her hair, to rest with her father, in earth. And thou king of roaring Urlor, let the battle cease, till Annir receive the shell, from fiery-eyed Cruth-loda.

Bursting into tears, she rose, and tore a lock from her hair; a lock, which wandered in the blast, along her heaving breast; Corman-trunar gave the shell; and bade me rejoice before him. I rested in the shade of night; and hid my face in my helmet deep. Sleep descended on the foe. I rose, like a stalking ghost. I pierced the side of Corman-trunar. Nor did Foinar-bragal escape. She rolled her white bosom in blood. Why then daughter of heroes, didst thou wake my rage? Morning rose. The foe were fled, like the departure of mist. Annir struck his bossy shield. He called his dark-haired son. I came, streaked with wandering blood: thrice rose the shout of the king, like the bursting forth of a squal of wind, from a cloud, by night. We rejoiced three days above the dead, and called the hawks of heaven. They came, from all their winds, to feast on Annir's foes. Swaran! Fingal is alone, on his hill of night. Let thy spear pierce the king in secret; like Annir, my soul shall rejoice.

"Son of Annir of Gormal, Swaran shall not slay in shades. I move forth in light: the hawks rush from all their winds. They are wont to trace my course it is not harmless through war."

Burning rose the rage of the king. He thrice raise his gleaming spear. But, starting, he spared his son and rushed into the night. By Turthur's stream a cav

is dark, the dwelling of Conban-carglas. There he laid the helmet of kings, and called the maid of Lulan, but she was distant far, in Loda's resounding hall.

Swelling with rage, he strode to where Fingal lay alone. The king was laid on his shield, on his own secret hill. Stern hunter of shaggy boars, no feeble maid is laid before thee: no boy, on his ferny bed, by Turthor's murmuring stream. Here is spread the couch of the mighty, from which they rise to deeds of death. Hunter of shaggy boars, awaken the terrible.

Starno came murmuring on. Fingal arose in arms. "Who art thou, son of night?" Silent he threw the spear. They mixed their gloomy strife. The shield of Starno fell, cleft in twain. He is bound to an oak. The early beam arose. Then Fingal beheld the king of Gormal. He rolled awhile his silent eyes. He thought of other days when white-bosomed Agandecca moved like the music of songs. He loosed the thong from his hands. Son of Annir, he said, retire. Retire to Gormal of shells: a beam that was set returns. I remember thy white-bosomed daughter; dreadful king, away! Go to thy troubled dwelling, cloudy foe of the lovely! Let the stranger shun thee, thou gloomy in the hall!

A tale of the times of old!

OINA-MORUL:

A POEM.

The Argument.

After an address to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, Ossian proceeds to relate his own expedition to Fuarfed, an island of Scandinavia. Mal-orchol, king of Fuarfed, being hard pressed in war, by Ton-thormod, chief of Sar-dronla, (who had demanded in vain, the daughter of Mal-orchol in marriage), Fingal sent Ossian to his aid. Ossian, on the day after his arrival, came to battle with Ton-thormod, and took him prisoner. Mal-orchol offers his daughter Oina-morul to Ossian; but he, discovering her passion for Ton-thormod, generously surrenders her to her lover, and brings about a reconciliation between the two kings.

As flies the inconstant sun over Larmon's grassy hill; so pass the tales of old, along my soul, by night. When bards are removed to their place; when harps are hung in Selma's hall; then comes a voice to Ossian, and awakes his soul. It is the voice of years that are gone: they roll before me, with all their deeds. I seize the tales, as they pass, and pour them forth in song. Not a troubled stream is the soul of the king, it is like the rising of music from Lutha of the strings. Lutha of many strings, not silent are thy streamy rocks, when the white hands of Malvina move upon the harp. Light of the shadowy thoughts, that fly across my soul, daughter of Toscar of helmets, wilt thou not hear the song? We call back, maid of Lutha, the years that have rolled away!

It was in the days of the king [a], while yet my locks were young, that I marked Con-cathlin [b], on high

a Fingal.

b Con-cathlin, 'mild beam of the wave.' What star was so called of old is not easily ascertained. Some now distinguish the pole star by that name. A song, which is still in repute among the seafaring part of the Highlanders, alludes to this passage of Ossian. The author commends the knowledge of Ossian in sea affairs, a merit which, perhaps few of us moderns will allow him, or any in the age in which he lived. One thing is certain, that the Caledonians often made their way through the dangerous and tempestuous seas of Scandinavia, which is more, perhaps, than the more polished nations subsisting in those times, dared to venture. In estimating the degree of knowledge of arts among the ancients, we ought not to bring it into comparison with the improvements of modern time. Our advantages over them proceed more from accident, than any merit of ours.

from ocean's nightly wave. My course was towards the isle of Fuarfed, woody dweller of seas. Fingal had sent me to the aid of Mal-orchol king of Fuarfed wild: for war was around him, and our fathers had met at the feast.

In Col-coiled, I bound my sails, and sent my sword to Mal-orchol of shells. He knew the signal of Albion, and his joy arose. He came from his own high hall, and seized my hand in grief. "Why comes the race of heroes to a falling king? Ton-thormod of many spears is the chief of wavy Sar-dronla. He saw and loved my daughter, white-bosomed Oina-morul. He sought: I denied the maid; for our fathers had been foes. He came, with battle, to Fuarfed. My people are rolled away. Why comes the race of heroes to a falling king?"

I come not, I said, to look, like a boy, on the strife. Fingal remembers Mal-orchol, and his hall for strangers. From his waves, the warrior descended, on thy woody isle. Thou wert no cloud before him. Thy feast was spread with songs. For this my sword shall rise; and thy foes perhaps may fail. Our friends are not forgot in their danger, though distant is our land.

"Son of the daring Trenmor, thy words are like the voice of Cruth-loda, when he speaks, from his parting cloud, strong dweller of the sky! Many have rejoiced at my feast; but they all have forgot Mal-orchol. I have looked towards all the winds, but no white sails were seen. But steel [c] resounds in my hall; and not the joyful shells. Come to my dwelling, race of heroes: dark-skirted night is near. Hear the voice of songs, from the maid of Fuarfed."

c There is a severe satire couched in this expression, against the guests of Mal-orchol. Had his feast been still spread, had joy continued in his hall, his former parasites would not fail to resort to him. But as the time of festivity was past, their attendance also ceased. The sentiments of a certain old bard are agreeable to this observation. He poetically compares a great man to a fire kindled in a desart place. "Those that pay court to him, says he, are rolling large around him, like the smoke about the fire. This smoke gives the fire a great appearance at a distance, but it is an empty vapour itself, and varying its form at every breeze. When the trunk which fed the fire is consumed, the smoke departs on all the winds. So the flatterers forsake their chief, when his power declines." I have chosen to give a paraphrase, rather than a translation, of this passage, as the original is verbose and frothy, notwithstanding of the sentimental merit of the author. He was one of the less ancient bards, and their compositions are not nervous enough to bear a literal translation.

We went. On the harp arose the white hands of Oina-morul. She waked her own sad tale, from every trembling string. I stood in silence; for bright in her locks was the daughter of many isles. Her eyes were like two stars, looking forward through a rushing shower. The mariner marks them on high, and blesses the lovely beams. With morning we rushed to battle, to Tormul's resounding stream; the foe moved to the sound of Ton-thormod's bossy shield. From wing to wing the strife was mixed. I met the chief of Sardronlo. Wide flew his broken steel. I seized the king in fight. I gave his hand bound fast with thongs, to Mal-orchol, the giver of shells. Joy rose at the feast of Fuarfed, for the foe had failed. Ton-thormod turned his face away, from Oina-morul of isles.

"Son of Fingal," begun Mal-orchol, "not forgot shalt thou pass from me. A light shall dwell in thy ship. Oina-morul of slow-rolling eyes. She shall kindle gladness along thy mighty soul. Nor unheeded shall the maid move in Selma, through the dwelling of kings."

In the hall I lay in night. Mine eyes were half closed in sleep. Soft music came to mine ear; it was like the rising breeze, that whirls, at first, the thistle's beard; then flies, dark-shadowy, over the grass. It was the maid of Fuarfed wild: she raised the nightly song; for she knew that my soul was a stream, that flowed at pleasant sounds.

Who looks, she said, from his rock, on ocean's closing mist? His long locks, like the raven's wing, are wandering on the blast. Stately are his steps in grief. The tears are in his eyes. His manly breast is heaving over his bursting soul. Retire, I am distant far; a wanderer in lands unknown. Though the race of kings are around me, yet my soul is dark. Why have our fathers been foes, Ton-thormod, love of maids!

Soft voice of the streamy isle, why dost thou mourn by night: the race of daring Trenmor are not the dark in soul. Thou shalt not wander, by streams unknown, blue-eyed Oina-morul. Within this bosom is a voice;

it comes not to other ears; it bids Ossian hear the hapless, in their hour of woe. Retire, soft singer by night; Ton-thormod shall not mourn on his rock.

With morning I loosed the king. I gave the long-haired maid. Mal-orchol heard my words, in the midst of his echoing halls. "King of Fuarfed wild, why should Ton-thormod mourn? He is of the race of heroes, and a flame in war. Your fathers have been foes, but now their dim ghosts rejoice in death. They stretch their arms of mist to the same shell in Loda. Forget their rage, ye warriors, it was the cloud of other years."

Such were the deeds of Ossian, while yet his locks were young: though loveliness, with a robe of beams, clothed the daughter of many isles. We call back, maid of Lutha, the years that have rolled away.

COLNA-DONA:

A POEM.

The Argument.

Fingal dispatches Ossian and Toscar, to raise a stone, on the banks of the stream of Crona, to perpetuate the memory of a victory, which he had obtained in that place. When they were employed in that work, Car-ul, a neighbouring chief, invited them to a feast. They went; and Toscar fell desperately in love with Colna-dona, the daughter of Car-ul. Colna-dona became no less enamoured of Toscar. An incident, at a hunting party, brings their loves to a happy issue.

COL-AMON [a] of troubled streams, dark wanderer of distant vales, I behold thy course, between trees, near Car-ul's echoing halls. There dwelt bright Colna-dona, the daughter of the king. Her eyes were rolling stars; her arms were white as the foam of streams. Her breast rose slowly to sight, like ocean's heaving wave. Her soul was a stream of light. Who, among the maids, was like the love of heroes?

Beneath the voice of the king, we moved to Crona [b] of the streams, Toscar of grassy Lutha, and Ossian, young in fields. Three bards attended with songs. Three bossy shields were borne before us; for we were to rear the stone, in memory of the past. By Crona's

a Colna-dona signifies the love of heroes. Col-amon, 'narrow river.' Car-ul, 'dark eyes' Col-amon, the residence of Car-ul, was in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall, towards the south. Car-ul seems to have been of the race of those Britons distinguished by the name of Maiatæ, by the writers of Rome. Maiatæ is derived from two Gaelic words, 'Moi,' a plain, and 'Aitich,' inhabitants; so that the signification of Maiatæ is, the inhabitants of the plain country; a name given to the Britons, who were settled in the Lowlands, in contradistinction to the Caledonians, (i.e. 'Cael-don,' the Gauls of the hills,) who were possest of the more mountainous division of North Britain.

b Crona, 'murmuring,' was the name of a small stream, which discharged itself into the river Carron. It is often mentioned by Ossian, and the scenes of many of his poems are on its banks. The enemies, whom Fingal defeated here, are not mentioned. They were, probably, the provincial Britons. That tract of country between the Friths of Forth and Clyde has been, through all antiquity, famous for battles and rencounters, between the different nations who were possessed of North and South Britain. Stirling, a town situated there, derives its name from that very circumstance. It is a corruption of the Gaelic name 'Stirla,' i. e. the hill, or rock of contention.

mossy course Fingal had scattered his foes: he had rolled away the strangers, like a troubled sea. We came to the place of renown: from the mountains descended night. I tore an oak from its hill, and raised a flame on high. I bade my fathers to look down, from the clouds of their hall; for, at the fame of their race, they brighten in the wind.

I took a stone from the stream, amidst the song of bards. The blood of Fingal's foes hung curdled in its ooze. Beneath, I placed, at intervals, three bosses from the shield of foes, as rose or fell the sound of Ullin's nightly song. Toscar laid a dagger in earth, a mail of sounding steel. We raised the mould around the stone, and bade it speak to other years.

Oozy daughter of streams, that now art reared on high, speak to the feeble, O stone, after Selma's race have failed! Prone, from the stormy night, the traveller shall lay him, by thy side: thy whistling moss shall sound in his dreams; the years that were past shall return. Battles rise before him, blue-shielded kings descend to war: the darkened moon looks from heaven, on the troubled field. He shall burst, with morning, from dreams, and see the tombs of warriors round. He shall ask about the stone, and the aged will reply, "This grey stone was raised by Ossian, a chief of other years."

From [c] Col-amon came a bard, from Car-ul, the friend of strangers. He bade us to the feast of kings, to the dwelling of bright Colna-dona. We went to the hall of harps. There Car-ul brightened between his aged locks, when he beheld the sons of his friends, like two young trees with their leaves.

[c] The manners of the Britons and Caledonians were so similar in the days of Ossian, that there can be no doubt, they were originally the same people, and descended from those Gauls who first possessed themselves of South Britain, and gradually migrated to the north. This hypothesis is more rational than the idle fables of ill-informed senachies, who bring the Caledonians from distant countries. The bare opinion of Tacitus, which, by the bye, was only founded on a similarity of the personal figure of the Caledonians to the Germans of his own time, though it has staggered some learned men, is not sufficient to make us believe, that the ancient inhabitants of North-Britain were a German colony. A discussion of a point like this might be curious, but could never be satisfactory. Periods so distant are so involved in obscurity, that nothing certain can now be advanced concerning them. The light which the Roman writers hold forth is too feeble to guide us to the truth, through the darkness which has surrounded its

" Sons of the mighty," he said, " ye bring back the days of old, when first I descended from waves, on Selma's streamy vale. I pursued Duth-mocarglos, dweller of ocean's wind. Our fathers had been foes, we met by Clutha's winding waters. He fled along the sea, and my sails were spread behind him. Night deceived me on the deep. I came to the dwelling of kings, to Selma of high-bosomed maids. Fingal came forth with his bards, and Conloch, arm of death. I feasted three days in the hall, and saw the blue eyes of Erin, Ros-crana, daughter of heroes, light of Cormac's race. Nor forgot did my steps depart : the kings gave their shields to Car-ul : they hang, on high, in Colamon, in memory of the past. Son of the daring kings, ye bring back the days of old."

Car-ul placed the oak of feasts. He took two bosses from our shields. He laid them in earth, beneath a stone, to speak to the hero's race. " When battle (said the king) shall roar, and our sons are to meet in wrath ; my race shall look, perhaps, on this stone, when they prepare the spear. Have not our fathers met in peace, they will say, and lay aside the shield.

Night came down. In her long locks moved the daughter of Car-ul. Mixed with the harp arose the voice of white-armed Colna-dona. Toscar darkened in his place, before the love of heroes. She came on his troubled soul, like a beam to the dark-heaving ocean : when it bursts from a cloud, and brightens the foamy side of a wave[d].

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With morning we awaked the woods ; and hung forward on the path of roes. They fell by their wonted streams. We returned through Crona's vale. From the wood a youth came forward, with a shield and pointless spear. " Whence, said Toscar of Lutha, is the flying beam ? Dwells there peace at Col-amon, round bright Colna-dona of harps ?"

[d] Here an episode is entirely lost ; or, at least, is handed down so imperfectly, that it does not deserve a place in the poem.

" By Col-amon of streams," said the youth, " bright Colna-dona dwelt. She dwelt; but her course is now in desarts, with the son of the king; he that seized her soul as it wandered through the hall."

" Stranger of tales," said Toscar, " hast thou marked the warrior's course? He must fall; give thou that bossy shield! In wrath he took the shield. Fair behind it heaved the breast of a maid, white as the bosom of a swan, rising on swift-rolling waves. It was Colna-dona of harps, the daughter of the king, her blue eyes had rolled on Toscar, and her love arose."

THE DEATH OF OSCAR:

A POEM.

Introduction.

One of the fragments of Ancient Poetry lately published, gives a different account of the death of Oscar the son of Ossian. The translator, though he well knew the more probable traditions concerning that hero, was unwilling to reject a poem, which, if not really of Ossian's composition, has much of his manner, and concise turn of expression. A more correct copy of that fragment, which has since come into the translator's hands, has enabled him to correct the mistake, into which a similarity of names had led those who handed down the poem by tradition. The heroes of the piece are Oscar the son of Caruth, and Dermid the son of Diaran. Ossian, or perhaps his imitator, opens the poem with a lamentation for Oscar, and afterwards, by an easy transition, relates the story of Oscar the son of Caruth, who seems to have borne the same character, as well as name, with Oscar the son of Ossian. Though the translator thinks he has good reason to reject the fragment as the composition of Ossian, yet as it is, after all, still somewhat doubtful whether it is or not, he has subjoined it.

Why openest thou afresh the spring of my grief, O son of Alpin, inquiring how Oscar fell? My eyes are blind with tears; but memory beams on my heart. How can I relate the mournful death of the head of the people! Chief of the warriors, Oscar, my son, shall I see thee no more!

He fell as the moon in a storm; as the sun from the midst of his course, when clouds rise from the waste of the waves, when the blackness of the storm inwraps the rocks of Ardannider. I, like an ancient oak on Morven, moulder alone in my place. The blast hath lopped my branches away: and I tremble at the wings of the north. Chief of the warriors, Oscar, my son! shall I see thee no more?

But, son of Alpin, the hero fell not harmless as the grass of the field; the blood of the mighty was on his sword, and he travelled with death through the ranks of their pride. But Oscar, thou son of Caruth, thou hast fallen low! No enemy fell by thy hand. Thy spear was stained with the blood of thy friend.

Dermid and Oscar were one: they reaped the battle together. Their friendship was strong as their steel; and death walked between them to the field. They came on the foe like two rocks falling from the brows of Ardven. Their swords were stained with the blood of the valiant: warriors fainted at their names. Who was equal to Oscar, but Dermid? and who to Dermid, but Oscar?

They killed mighty Dargo in the field; Dargo who never fled in war. His daughter was fair as the morn; mild as the beam of night. Her eyes, like two stars in a shower; her breath the gale of spring: her breasts as the new fallen snow, floating on the moving heath. The warriors saw her, and loved; their souls were fixed on the maid. Each loved her as his fame; each must possess her or die. But her soul was fixed on Oscar; the son of Caruth was the youth of her love. She forgot the blood of her father; and loved the hand that slew him.

Son of Caruth, said Dermid, I love; O Oscar, I love this maid. But her soul cleaveth unto thee; and nothing can heal Dermid. Here, pierce this bosom, Oscar, relieve me, my friend, with thy sword.

My sword, son of Diaran, shall never be stained with the blood of Dermid.

Who then is worthy to slay me, O Oscar, son of Caruth? Let not my life pass away unknown. Let none but Oscar slay me. Send me with honour to the grave, and let my death be renowned.

Dermid, make use of thy sword; son of Diaran wield thy steel. Would that I fell with thee! that my death came from the hand of Dermid!

They fought by the brook of the mountain, by the streams of Branno. Blood tinged the running water, and curdled round the mossy stones. The stately Dermid fell; he fell, and smiled in death.

And fallest thou, son of Diaran, fallest thou by Oscar's hand! Dermid! who never yielded in war, thus do I see thee fall! He went, and returned to the maid of his love; he returned, but she perceived his grief.

Why that gloom, son of Caruth? what shades thy mighty soul!

Thou once renowned for the bow, O maid, I have lost my fame. Fixed on a tree, by the brook of the hill, is the shield of the valiant Gormur, whom I slew in battle. I have wasted the day in vain, nor could my arrow pierce it.

Let me try, son of Caruth, the skill of Dargo's daughter. My hands were taught the bow: my father delighted in my skill.

She went. He stood behind the shield. Her arrow flew, and pierced his breast.

Blessed be that hand of snow; and blessed that bow of yew! Who but the daughter of Dargo was worthy to slay the son of Caruth? Lay me in the earth, my fair one; lay me by the side of Dermid.

Oscar! the maid replied, I have the soul of the mighty Dargo. Well pleased I can meet death. My sorrow I can end. She pierced her white bosom with the steel. She fell; she trembled; and died.

By the brook of the hill their graves are laid; a birch's unequal shade covers their tomb. Often on their green earthen tombs, the branchy sons of the mountain feed, when mid-day is all in flames, and silence over all the hills.

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